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PHILIP GUSTON

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Harry F. Guggenheim, President

89. The Tale. 1961. Lent by the artist.

PHILIP GUSTON

BY H. H. ARNASON

I

For the twenty-five years of his professional career, the paintings of Philip Guston have been a dialogue between subject and abstract structure. At times, this dialogue has been resolved in a lyrical harmony in which the protagonists achieve an agreement so complete that there seems no basis of conflict. At other times, the dialogue becomes a battle of forces seemingly intent on the destruction of all definitions of representation and abstraction. Guston is widely recognized as an artist who achieved success as a figurative painter in the Forties, who then abandoned this position in 1947 to become an abstractionist, and is now one of the leading abstract expressionists of our time.[1] However, the pattern of his development is by no means as simple as this statement would imply. Both before and after he abandoned recognizable subject matter, he studied intensively questions of abstract organization, of color and its relationships with pictorial or illusionistic space. This study led him in the early Fifties to Mondrian; and the sense of the total image as well as the severe vertical-horizontal axis of a number of paintings of that time reflect his comparable search for the definition of the picture plane. But, despite the control of the picture rectangle, nothing could be more different from Mondrian than the means Guston used or the effect he achieved.

For footnotes see pages 38-39.

The paintings of 1952 and 1953 in their generally rectangular balance, their investigation of spatial relationships, may perhaps be more appropriately termed 'abstract' than any other paintings of Guston's career. Yet, even in these the shimmering, illusionistic color applied in small, vibrating brush strokes denies the abstract, geometric structure to create associations of moving light, even at times of landscape.

With works like *Zone*, 1953, and *Beggar's Joys*, 1954, both the sense of geometric structure and any suggestion of impressionist landscape have disappeared. Larger, asymmetrically balanced color shapes, an order that is organic rather than geometric, color that is expressive rather than impressionist, create new associations, new subjects which are analogies rather than reflections of objective nature.

Philip Guston was born in 1913 in Montreal, Canada, and grew up in Los Angeles, California, where he began drawing and painting while in high school. He is self-trained except for a few months at the Otis Art Institute. Although he was aware at an early age of the paintings of the post impressionists and the cubists, he saw these only through reproductions, except for the works which he viewed briefly in the Arensberg Collection. His first strong interest was actually for certain Renaissance masters such as Uccello, Mantegna and Piero della Francesca, and his first major problem as a painter was the analysis of their perspectival, architectural space in its relations to the contracted, re-assembled space of the cubists. While the surrealists did not particularly interest him, he was fascinated (and still is) by the early paintings of de Chirico, both in terms of their combinations of Renaissance and cubist spatial organization, and in terms of the haunting mystery of the subject. Aside from de Chirico, the classical Picassos of the Arensberg Collection impressed him the most. The painter, Lorser Feitelson, with whom a number of Guston's friends were then studying, was influential in acquainting him with the Renaissance artists.

The interest in the Renaissance fresco painters, as well as the then current vogue of the Mexican muralists, drew him to Mexico in 1934. In 1934 and 1935, he worked on the Public Works Administration in Los Angeles, collaborating on two murals with Reuben Kadish. In 1936, Guston moved to New York and joined the Federal Arts Project of the Works Progress Administration there. His first commission was a mural for Kings County Hospital. He worked on the cartoons for a year and a half, only to have them rejected. In New York for the first time he saw quantities of modern painting at the Museum of Modern Art and at dealers' galleries. He also became acquainted on the Project with artists such as Burgoyne Diller and James Brooks, who were painting abstractly or semi-abstractly. The contacts with cubist and abstract art and artists did not at this time result in any conscious desire to become an abstractionist. It did, however, intensify his already active interest in bringing the objects in his paintings up to the picture plane, in creating through overlapping shapes a tension between surface and depth, a rhythm which would permeate and unify the entire picture.

Detail from *Queensbridge Housing Project, 1940.*

A second mural, for a Queensbridge Housing Project on Long Island, was actually completed between 1940 and 1941 and represents a substantial advance over the first mural project in a simplified architectural organization which reflects both his study of cubism and perhaps even more his continued fascination with Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* in the Louvre, of which he now owned large color reproductions.[2]

His study of the cubists continued, both through visits to galleries and through reproductions of cubist Braques and Picassos in a large volume of *Cahiers d'Art* which he bought and kept in his studio for constant reference. The great Picasso Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (1940) was an outstanding event for him as it was for so many American painters at this period. The Gallatin Collection was then on exhibition at New York University and the full implications of cubism were finally revealed to him in terms of Picasso's *Three Musicians* and Léger's *The City*.

In 1941, Guston went off the Project. He was exhausted with mural painting and all the conditions and Commissions that were involved.[3] Up to this time he had produced very few easel paintings. Since his arrival in New York, he had drawn continually, both sketches for mural projects, and drawings from the models which the Project provided. He now felt an intense desire to summarize his reflections on subject, his spatial and technical experiments in easel paintings created for himself rather than for an Art Commission.

The painting which Guston considers his first major commitment to oil painting, his first mature statement as an independent artist is *Martial Memory*, 1941 (no. 1).[4] This had its genesis in a passage from the Queensbridge Housing Project mural (p. 13) in which he depicted children fighting a mock war with saucepans for helmets and garbage tin covers for shields. This passage was the result of his having observed such a battle and having been intrigued by the elements of make believe. He made of it a simplified, sculptural, somewhat cubist adaptation of passages from Uccello's *Battle of San Romano*. The subject and its formal possibilities continued to interest him. He returned to it in a small easel painting of 1940 and again in the *Martial Memory* of 1941. The 1940 easel painting is a free variant of the mural passage, emphasizing the tightly organized figure composition within a constricted, frontalized space. The faces in both the mural and this painting are completely masked, and the modelled figures, rotating in limited depth, suggest relief sculpture.

In *Martial Memory*, both the structure and the content of the painting change radically. This is a tonal, shadowed painting; the paint is laid on flatly and rather dryly, suggestive of fresco rather than oil. Walls and blank windowed, square buildings seal in the background and confine the action to a shallow foreground. The figures and architecture emerge as flat, overlapping shapes, creating an effect of cubist structure. The sense of abstract organization is achieved with little distortion of the figures. These are still perfectly recognizable children, existing as solid objects within surrounding atmosphere. In fact, the subject element is even stronger in this work than in the two preceding versions. In those, the masked faces and the stylized arrangement in movement tend to dehumanize the children and concentrate attention on the formal elements. In *Martial Memory*, the children's faces appear clearly or are half suggested, faces as impassive and withdrawn as those in a Piero della Francesca painting. The added element is that of mood. As H. W. Janson has pointed out, "In *Martial Memory*... the boys are displaying their grotesque arsenal with strange, slow solemnity as if their play had suddenly turned into a ritual."[5] The mood of strangeness or mystery is reinforced by the blank, empty windows of the buildings, reminiscent of the architecture of early de Chirico. In this painting the duality of Guston's work becomes clearly apparent. At the very moment when he was turning towards a more abstract organization he introduced into his

paintings a strong sense of subject rooted in observation of natural objects and reflection on the mystery of a children's world. This dialogue between representational subject and abstract structure was to continue intermittently for the next seven years, most specifically in the series of paintings on the theme of childhood.

In the fall of 1941, Guston went to the University of Iowa as Visiting Artist. He entered into teaching with enthusiasm, purchasing for the classroom studios large color prints of cubist paintings and examples of Uccello, Piero della Francesca, Giorgione, and other Renaissance artists. He taught principles of cubist painting and in the process of teaching for a time lost interest in them himself. In his own work he concentrated on drawing from the model and painted a number of single figures, in which he concerned himself particularly with the exploration of the possibilities of oil paint.

Sanctuary, 1944, (no. 2) was painted in Iowa City, and shows details of an Iowa City street in the background. The color, in deep reds and greens, has here become much richer; the figure is modelled in color and light and shadow in a manner suggestive of the Venetian Renaissance. The reclining boy stares out at the spectator with an expression of haunting melancholy which carries the withdrawn expression of the figures in *Martial Memory* to the point of romantic nostalgia. This and other single figures of this time, accomplished as they are in traditional terms, seem to be almost a retrogression, a denial of the contemporary world which he had been exploring. However, they were necessary technical experiments to complete his control of the oil medium, and they were necessary personal experiments in his search for a subject matter.

These lyrical, sensuously painted figures were immediately popular, and enhanced the growing reputation of the artist, although not in terms which necessarily pleased him. In 1945, he won first prize at the Carnegie International for a comparable single figure, entitled *Sentimental Moment*, 1944. As a result he was given a three page color spread in *Life* magazine (May 27, 1946), in which, however, he protested that he did not like the literal approach of his prize winning painting.

In 1944, thoroughly in control of the oil medium, he returned to the theme of the children in a large and complex work, entitled *If This Be Not I*, 1944-45, (no. 3). This he worked and reworked for more than a year, attempting to put into it all his recent reflections on subject, all his experiments in Renaissance and cubist organization. It is a night scene, predominantly blue in color, richly and heavily painted. A crowd of children, some masked, some with faces partially concealed or covered, fill the columned porch of an old, dilapidated Midwestern house. The subject is again all the strangeness and mystery of childhood, of a world that no adult can enter. In comparison with *Martial Memory* this is much more painterly, with extensive use of light and shadow creating an ambiguity in the placing of forms which both complicates and helps to unify the total picture.

In 1945, after he had completed *If This Be Not I*, Guston left Iowa to teach at Washington University in St. Louis. Here he painted, between 1945 and 1947, a further series of paintings of children, in which the emphasis as well as the style changed radically. (e.g. *Night Children*, 1945; *Somersault I*, 1945;[6] *Somersault II*, 1946; *Porch I*, 1946; *Porch II*, 1947, no. 6). *Night Children*,[7] like *If This Be Not I*, is a dark picture, but the figures are flatly and more abstractly painted. The architectural background is now completely flattened out and brought up to the frontal plane. Strong background reds push forward between the more soberly painted foreground figures to create a total picture space visually ambiguous but structurally unified. Here the children cease to be individuals occupying a mysterious children's world and become essentially color shapes moving in and out and across a delimited, frontalized space. At the opposite extreme from *If This Be Not I*, Guston has now subordinated subject to concentrate on the formal aspects of the painting. In a sense this picture, in its balance of organizational and of representational elements, stems from *Martial Memory* of 1941 rather than from *If This Be Not I*. Although he has moved further towards abstraction, the involvement with subject matter taken from nature still persists and continues to persist in the *Somersault* and *Porch* pictures.

Somersault I and *Somersault II* are perhaps the most cubist of the entire series. Figures and all other objects are packed into an almost flat frontal area. Distinctions between foreground and background cease to exist. Distorted, inverted figures are reminiscent of and probably influenced by surrealist Picassos of the late Twenties and early Thirties. In comparison, *Porch I* and *Porch II* are more open, relatively more naturalistic; although in these a strong, cruciform architectural structure emphasizes the geometry of the picture plane in a greater degree than in any painting to this date. The color in these two works is lighter and applied more flatly, and this fact, together with the architectural elements, reiterates Guston's continuing passion for Piero della Francesca.

A final, small figure composition dated 1947 is the last such painting Guston did before eliminating representation from his paintings. This is a sketch, *Untitled*, but related in theme to the *Somersault* and the *Porch* series. In color, however, it is dark, almost monochromatic. The figures and background elements are now so integrated as to disappear as separate entities and to merge as an almost abstract image on the picture plane.

By 1947, Guston, although his production was not large, and although, as was the case with most artists during the depression and war years, he had not actually sold many paintings, was nevertheless securely established as one of the leading figure paint-

ers in the United States. It is a common error to refer to his work during this period as social realism. In fact, he painted few paintings involving social, political or economic problems. In 1932, when he was still essentially a student, he did a highly stylized painting of Ku Klux Klan figures entitled *Conspiracy*. During the Spanish Civil War he painted a tondo, *Bombardment*, 1937; and some illustrations commissioned by *Fortune Magazine* (August, 1943, October, 1943) involved war subjects. His W.P.A. murals were rather abstracted observations of American scenes than indictments of aspects of American life. The children pictures which constituted his most significant works of the Forties were statements of a very personal vision, explorations of a very personal world, rather than commentaries on events of the times. Their importance lies in their reflection of the artist's struggle with the problems of subject and the problems of the picture space.

Porch II was started in St. Louis and finished in Woodstock, New York, to which Guston had then moved. He had received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and, taking a year's leave of absence from Washington University, he was able to devote his time entirely to painting. He was then conscious that he had reached an impasse in his work. After finishing *Porch II*, he felt that he had exhausted the possibilities of the subjects he had explored for the past ten years but he did not yet consciously wish to give up representation. As a result, although he painted continuously, everything he painted dissatisfied him, seemed contrived or empty, and was destroyed. He tried experiments with figures and with color shapes taking the place of figures; he drew incessantly both in a figurative and non-figurative manner; but nothing seemed convincing.

In the summer of 1947, Guston met Bradley Walker Tomlin, who was then also attempting to find a new direction different from the highly accomplished cubist still lifes which he had been painting for years. They became friends and, although neither seems to have had much stylistic influence on the other, they liked each other's work. Each served as a source of support and encouragement to the other during this difficult time.

In the spring of 1948, Guston finished his first painting which might be called abstract, although even here there are suggestions of figures, and the painting is rooted in a definite subject idea. This was *Tormenters*, (no. 8). It is a black painting, with reds flashing through the blacks, overlaid with a highly structural linear pattern that outlines and suggests masked and hooded figures carrying upright sticks or clubs. The subject is related to *Conspiracy*, 1932, although here the *Tormentors* are envisioned as flogging themselves. The masks and hoods, of course, had appeared in a different context in a number of the children pictures; and structurally this work is very close to *Porch I* and

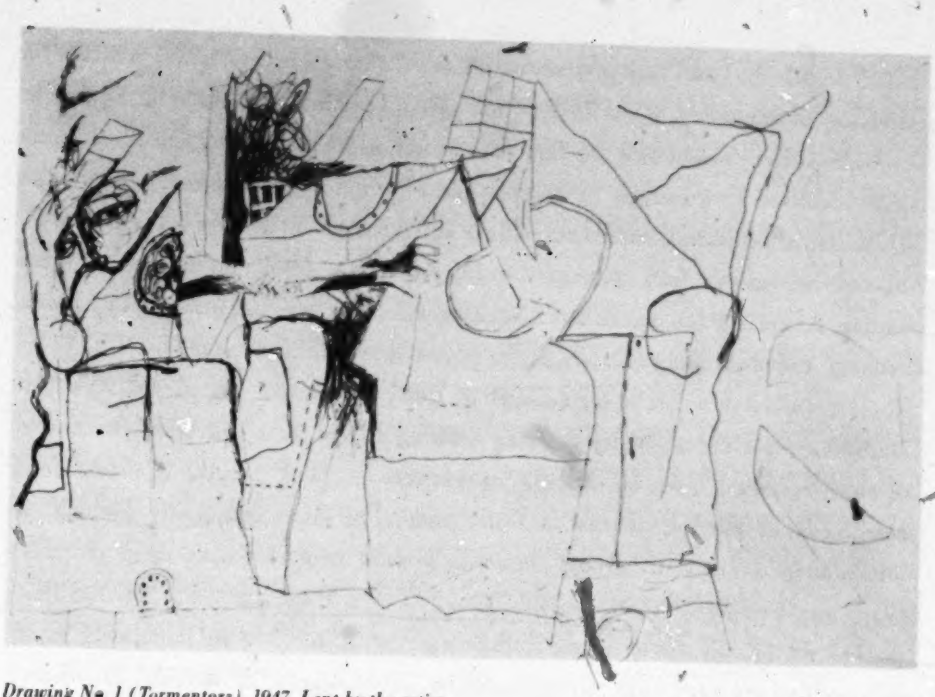
Porch II, completed the previous year. In fact, *Tormentors* began as another figure composition (Drawing No. 1), but successive scrapings ultimately eliminated most of the representational elements. The clearly defined color shapes and linear patterns give it much of the architectural feeling of the *Porch* paintings, but now illusionistic space is almost completely eliminated. Everything is brought towards the front plane. Depth is suggested only by color and overlapping of flat shapes.

In this work Guston at last felt that he was beginning to find a direction in which subject, mood, and abstract space organization had achieved the degree of integration which he had been seeking. The mood is dark and ominous. By using a red under the black and allowing this to push through in the large, regular, vertical and horizontal shapes, he arrived at a unity of foreground and background which held all elements in a single suspension. However, although he immediately started several other works in the same vein, none of these satisfied him. He destroyed them all, with the exception of one, later named *Review* (no. 9), which seemed to be developing in a promising manner.

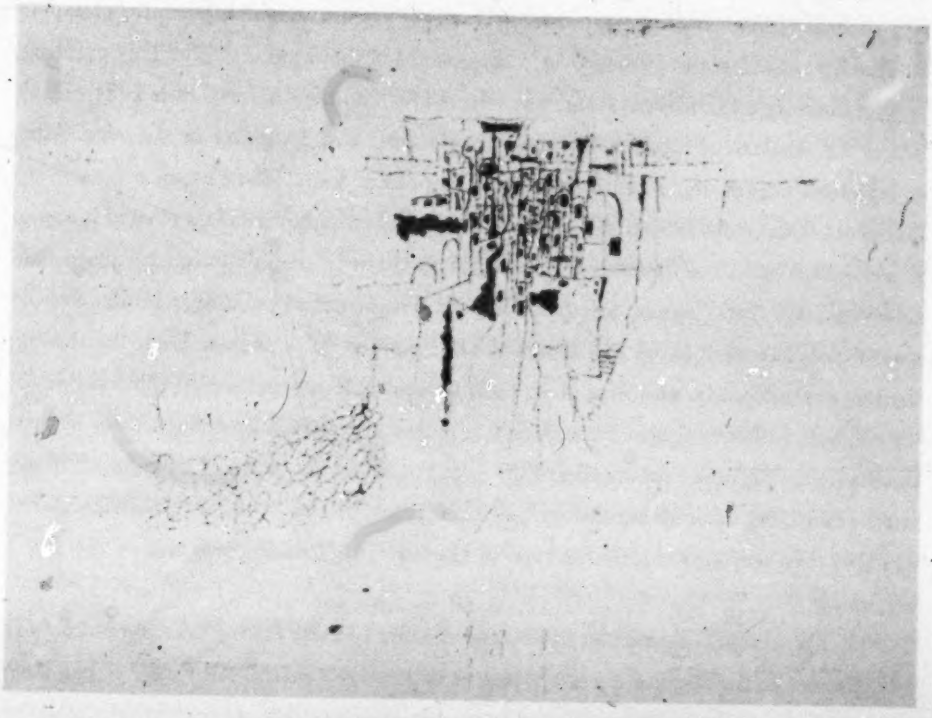
In the fall of 1948, Guston received a Prix de Rome and a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, on the basis of the figure painting which he had already abandoned. He took with him to Rome the partially painted canvas of *Review*, intending to complete it there. For a month he attempted to paint, then gave it up entirely, deciding that it was more important to spend his time seeing the art and architecture of Europe. During the rest of his stay, until October, 1949, he traveled extensively, principally in Italy but with visits to France and Spain. He painted not at all, but did make a number of architectural drawings of city scenes, in which the figure disappeared entirely and the abstract quality of the architecture itself helped to further his researches in space organization. *(Drawing No. 2).*

In October of 1949, Guston returned to Woodstock and finally that winter he finished *Review*. This was thus the only painting he had completed in almost a year and a half. In it he eliminated figures altogether, although he still made reference to objective nature—a New York cityscape of red brick buildings with a black sky looming overhead. This was a natural development from the European architectural drawings and from an increasing awareness of the New York scene. During the winter of 1949-1950, while still a resident of Woodstock, he visited New York City more frequently.

Until 1949, Guston, having lived away from New York since 1941, had not had very much contact with the painters associated with the abstract expressionist direction. He had known Pollock since they were boys in California. He had met de Kooning on the Project and met him again in 1948. At the same time, he met Motherwell, Rothko, Newman and some of the other experimental painters who had emerged or had turned to abstraction during the war. James Brooks and Guston met frequently at this time, and for a period during the early Fifties, after he had moved to New York, Guston took an active part in the meetings of the Eighth Street Club.



Drawing No. 1 (Tormentors). 1947. Lent by the artist.



Drawing No. 2 (Ischia). 1949. Lent by the artist.

In March, 1950, Guston went to Minneapolis for a term as Visiting Artist at the University of Minnesota. While there he was given a one-man exhibition at the University Gallery, but showed only his figurative paintings of the Forties and some of the Italian architectural drawings. He had brought with him a small abstract gouache (no. 10) painted after *Review*, but did not include it, *Tormentors* or *Review* in the exhibition. Although he was now fully committed to his move away from representational figure painting, he was still too unsure about what he was doing, still too involved in a period of change and uncertainty to be willing to expose these works to the public.

On his return east in the summer of 1950, Guston took a studio in New York City, and he obtained a position teaching drawing at New York University. In November and December, 1950, he was able to complete his third painting in almost three years. Since, despite the fact that he is not prolific, he works incessantly, nothing can indicate more strongly the struggle in which he was involved during these years. Although the three paintings, *Tormentors*, 1948; *Review*, 1949; and *Red Painting*, 1950, (no. 11) are the only oils to remain from this period, these three are immensely important in telling the story of his struggle and its resolution. In *Tormentors*, illusionistic depth is eliminated and the figures subordinated to shadow outlines. In *Review*, the figures are eliminated and of naturalistic subject only the suggestion of an architectural cityscape remains. In *Red Painting*, the suggestion of landscape is eliminated together with the pattern of rectangular color shapes. There remains an over-all dark and sombre red, covering the entire surface of the canvas, yet greatly varied in texture, changing continually, opening and closing over a suggested but ambiguous depth. This painting, in a preliminary and different form, was selected by Andrew Ritchie for his 1951 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*. After its selection, Guston repainted it entirely to its present form. When he, in some embarrassment, explained this fact to Ritchie, the latter told him nevertheless to send it along. It arrived too late to be illustrated in the catalogue, but in the exhibition it caused considerable controversy among artists and critics. The principal point of irritation was the almost complete destruction of visible forms or defined color shapes. Even the leading abstract expressionists, who were given their first notable recognition in this exhibition, were almost without exception composing in linear movements or defined color shapes. Guston's painting was denounced as "the end, the abyss, the point of no return." Many years before, the same denunciation had been made of the works of Mondrian. What was true then was also true in the case of Guston. This painting was not an end but a beginning.

The gradual elimination of objective nature in these three works did not by any means result in the elimination of subject or expressive content. All three, as has been suggested, are works of dark and sombre mood. They are shot through with a sense of

melancholy, with the uncertainties and difficulties which produced them. The color is powerful but in a rough and muddy way; the surfaces have an almost uncouth, leathery brutality of texture, still bleeding from the countless scrapings away of the paint which lies below them. Although in the traditional definition Guston had now become an abstractionist, he had not ceased to be a subject painter. Only now, the painting itself had become the subject.

Red Painting seemed to have broken the impasse, and the summer of 1951 produced several paintings, lighter in key, looser in construction, and involving a new step in the artist's development. A small white painting (*Painting No. 6*, 1951) followed *Red Painting*, with similar forms but more open, freer brush strokes. This was still a period of difficulty, in which Guston's principal problem was how he should finally liberate himself from his habit of deliberate construction, how he should achieve a directness of approach that would transcend any conscious intellectual formula. All his life he had practiced a mode of painting in which the basic idea was laid in rapidly, to be followed by months of rearrangement, elimination, adjustment, until gradually a result that was satisfactory was achieved.

When he gave up figure painting, he also tried to abandon this method of deliberate construction, for a long time with no success but with continual frustration. As he had walked through the museums of Europe he had so lost confidence in himself that he at times began to doubt whether he were a painter at all. All he knew was that he loved to draw and to put paint on canvas; so on his return to the United States he had determined that this was what he would do, without having any idea what the result would be. However, the habit of careful construction, of scraping down, eliminating, changing, adjusting, persisted through *Red Painting*, and, even though they began to move more rapidly, through the first works of 1951.

The problem was whether he could actually paint a picture directly, without conscious construction, and still have a result that could be called a painting. This is a problem that many artists have faced and with which many of the abstract expressionists were then struggling. Guston has described the denouement of this struggle as far as he was concerned:

"The desire for this direct expression finally became so strong that even the interval necessary to reach back to the palette beside me became too long; so one day I put up a large canvas and placed the palette in front of me. Then I forced myself to paint the entire work without once stepping back to look at it. I remember that I painted this (*White Painting I*, 1951, no. 14) in an hour. Ray Parker was to pick me up and take me to New York, so when he sounded the horn of his car, I put down my brushes, washed up, and went off with him. When I returned a couple of days later and saw the painting, it looked fine. There was nothing else I wanted to do to it."[8]

The resulting painting represents in a number of ways another major step. The directness and rapidity with which it was painted are reflected in the loose, open organization. The brush stroke is more assertively evident than in any previous work and lends to the entire surface a great sense of vitality. There is a rhythmic, linear movement from the center out to the edges of the picture. Because he was working on a canvas approximately five feet square and because he stayed in one position while painting, the organization was conditioned by the area he could reach without moving from place to place. Thus, almost accidentally, Guston discovered a pictorial form which delighted him and which he was to explore during the next several years in a variety of modes. The *White Painting*, although generally loose and open, achieves its greatest density towards the center and becomes progressively more open at the edges, with extensive areas of bare canvas framing the swirling, calligraphic brush strokes. The consciousness of the canvas square led to a certain emphasis on verticals and horizontals in the over-all design.

Another *White Painting*, 1951 (Pedlar Collection), also of a square shape, executed the same summer, quickly developed the possibilities of the first. Although somewhat more dense and textured, this is still an extremely light and openly painted work. Large areas of primed canvas frame the paint areas, particularly at top and bottom. The general orientation is more vertical and horizontal than the previous painting, again with a sense of outward radiation from a central focus. The color scheme is more varied, but still predominantly white and very light grays through which shine patches of light blue and ochre. In this picture, the brush strokes become less calligraphic, the total effect more painterly. Forms are built up by short, hatching brush strokes which begin to approximate that scintillating, luminous, and variegated paint surface which was to bring Guston the designation of "abstract impressionist." As an "abstract impressionist" his influence quickly began to be apparent on a number of other painters. These two works and a whole series of 'white paintings' produced in 1952 represented as substantial a departure from the first abstract works as those from the figurative pieces. Guston had proved to himself that the conscious and painstaking construction of his earlier works was no longer necessary. He could work directly and, without intellectualizing, achieve an effect that was both firm in its structure and fresh and immediate in its impact. This is not to say that Guston had now become a purely 'intuitive' painter—whatever that is. It was rather that the years of training and analysis of formal problems had now brought him to a point where he no longer had to reflect consciously about them while actually painting. Of course, he *has* continued to think about and experiment with construction. It was at this time that his interest in Mondrian began to develop, and both the economy and the sense of totality of many of the 1952 paintings may reflect this interest. He had now come to the realization that in painting taking out was also putting in.

A second ochre painting (*Ochre Painting II*) followed the first two white paintings in 1951 and represented something of a return to the over-all textured paintings

which preceded them. Then in *To B.W.T.* (no. 18), painted early in 1952, (dedicated to Tomlin who died in 1953) appeared one of the most fully realized of his early abstractions. This is also an almost square painting with the paint structure reiterating the square. It is richer in total color than both the earlier white paintings and those that followed it in 1952. Reds, oranges, and yellows are massed in the center and towards the edges are imperceptibly modified to light blues and grays. The brush stroke is again crisp and short, defined within a general texture to create a quality of luminosity, of light not reflected from the canvas but imbedded and contained within it. This sense of an inner luminosity, which saturated the paintings of the next years, gave to these paintings their lyrical, expressive power, their quality of an event which transcended the abstract construction.

To B.W.T. inaugurated the complete change of mood which characterized the paintings of the following several years. The first abstract works had been dark in color, sombre in mood, suggestive of the uncertainties of their conception and the labor of their creation. Now there emerged what can only be described as a quality of gaiety and delight, as though the artist had found his path or quite literally found a light through the shadows of his uncertainty. The paintings that followed *To B.W.T.* in 1952 were generally light in key, with delicate rose shading through the white, sometimes rotating about a cruciform central axis of strong but economically distributed reds, yellows and blues.

The summer of 1952 in Woodstock saw one of the most productive periods of Guston's career up to this point. He completed ten paintings in rapid succession, averaging a week or two on each one.[9] Within the generally light palette these paintings moved from the more over-all pattern of strongly defined though delicate color shapes to a greater and greater economy of effect. The paint is heavily textured and the final surface was arrived at by a constant scraping down and repainting of forms until a moment arrived when the artist realized that the painting was finished. The canvas was attacked quickly, a first series of forms laid in, and then the adjustments, the additions, and the eliminations continued as rapidly and with as little conscious construction as the hand could achieve. He worked, as he always had and still does, on one painting at a time; but the instant one was finished he moved on to another. While trying for a statement as direct as a momentary impulse, he continued to think a great deal about the entire question of painting. At this moment he was particularly concerned about the total rectangle, the attainment of an effect which could be immediately encompassed as a totality, not read from one passage to another. It was this more than the simple analogy of his vertical-horizontal emphases which drew him to Mondrian. He recognized that Mondrian's great achievement was his ability to force the spectator to look at the work of art as an entity; and this he sought for in his own painting. While painting, he would frequently leave the studio for an interval and then return to see the painting as though he were looking at it for the first time.

Although, during the summer, Guston more and more eliminated areas of strong color, the impact of those color shapes which remained, in their very isolation, achieved a greater intensity. The sparing use of intense color shapes made him increasingly conscious of the vibrations which their relations set up one with the other. From these vibrant color relationships emerged the sense of an inner light from the paintings, and the interactions of color shapes or forms became a theme, a subject, that he has continued to explore to the present time.

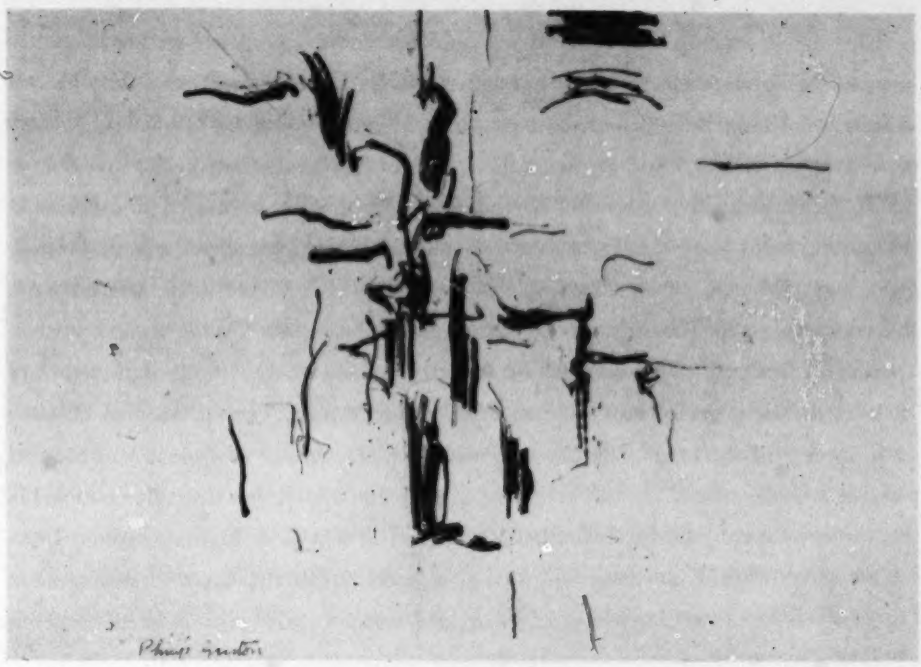
By 1952 Guston had freed himself from any reference to nature and had arrived at his most abstract period, yet the painting continued to be an expression. At this time he was particularly interested in the works of a number of modern composers, and one of these, Morton Feldman, became a close friend, who felt in Guston's painting a kinship to his own music. In Feldman's music also, Guston felt the sense of intimacy, of the direct impulse which he was working for in his painting. Feldman introduced him to the works of Webern and the late sonatas of Debussy.

II

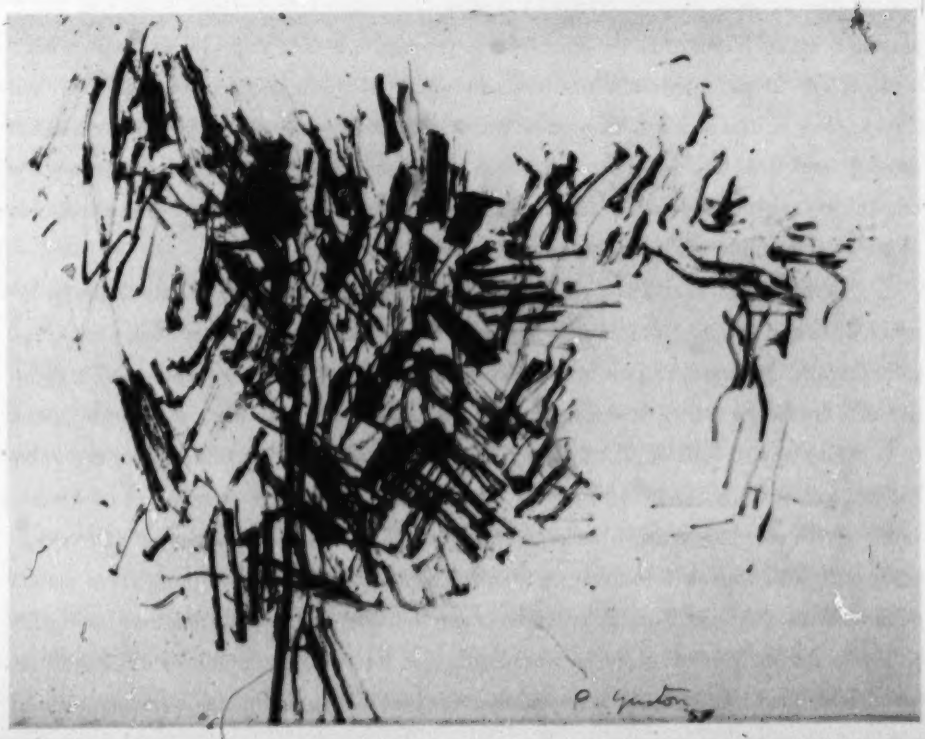
In 1945 Guston had exhibited a number of his figure paintings at the Midtown Gallery. Not long after this exhibition he left the gallery and until 1952 was without a dealer, only occasionally contributing a single painting to a group show in New York, such as the pioneer Ninth Street Show. He showed in a number of Whitney Annuals during the Forties. In January of 1952 he had an exhibition at the Peridot Gallery, although he did not actually join this gallery. Here he showed the first dark and light abstract works together with a number of drawings. He had made drawings continually during the period of transition, clarifying many of his problems and thoughts in terms of generally quick but sometimes highly detailed abstract sketches.

The successful production of the summer of 1952 was shown at the Egan Gallery in January, 1953. Both these exhibitions were generally damned by critics, who had liked his figurative paintings, and were shocked by the change in his work. However, Paul Brach, the painter, who was then writing for *Art Digest*, strongly defended Guston's new style. Painters increasingly admired the new work. Robert Motherwell, in an interview for *Art Digest* (January 15, 1953) described the Egan exhibition as the event of the season.

With the paintings in the Egan exhibition Guston had broken with his past of deliberate cubist construction, had achieved qualities of direct and immediate expression, in works of great formal beauty and economy. As was suggested earlier, these



Drawing No. 9. 1951. Collection Miss June Herman, New York.



Drawing No. 18. 1953. Lent by the artist.

paintings, in their almost geometric simplicity, their assertion of the picture plane, were perhaps the most completely abstract works of Guston's entire career. In fact, they had become almost too abstract, almost too ephemeral for him. He felt a need for a greater solidity, the elimination of linear elements, for a kind of painting, as he has said, "which could not exist in any other medium." The result of this dissatisfaction was first that he did not paint for some months after the exhibition. Then, when he started on a canvas in the late spring, he worked on it for over three months before he achieved a result that satisfied him. Although he continued to avoid conscious construction, he painted over, shifted forms, scraped down, reworked areas, gradually narrowed down the alternatives until finally in a rush of intense work he arrived at a point where "the air of the arbitrary vanished and the paint fell into positions that seemed destined." Irving Sandler, drawing on the words of the artist, has given an excellent description of Guston's method of painting and his attitude towards his painting.[10] Guston himself has described how in the short time before a painting is finished, "suddenly in a state of high excitement I can see the entire work. Everything falls into place and I realize that there is nothing more I can do. It is for the few hours when I sense that I am approaching this moment that I am a painter."

It is probable that this method and this attitude, which continue to characterize the work, were first completely formulated and realized during this period of change in 1953. The first new painting to be completed in the summer of 1953 was *Zone*.[11] In it, the previously dispersed units of strong color have now moved together into a great central red mass, which begins to take on a shape of its own, to become a definite form, almost a figure floating on an atmospheric ground, a living, organic presence, with a sense of weight and a potential of movement. What he was trying to do was possibly not then as clear to him as it has become in retrospect, but there is no question in terms of the development from this work through those of the next years, that what he sought was a new subject, a sense of forms which were not merely color shapes but were objects capable of a mysterious interaction with one another.

Attar, 1953 (no. 23), which followed *Zone*, and also was painted slowly between June and October, continues the rose and gray palette which Guston has exploited so brilliantly. It is more of an atmospheric painting, with the forms dispersed, suggestive of a landscape rather than a figure and, although more asymmetrical, looking back in a curious way to *To B. W. T.* of early 1952. Although Guston's painting over the years has progressed in a logical and coherent manner, the stages are punctuated by certain works which seem to be throwbacks to an earlier phase, and by others which are deliberate recapitulations of a number of ideas on which he has been working for a period of time. With *Attar* and *Zone* the painter began again to use titles, after numbering his paintings during 1952. His reason was simply that he found the numbers difficult to remember or identify. Also, the reappearance of titles was undoubtedly a consequence of

the reintroduction of a kind of subject. Titles to him must not be explicit; they must be oblique, a chance allusion, a personal association, a dedication to a friend.

Painting in the Museum of Modern Art (no. 24) was completed in the late spring of 1954 and represented a further movement in the direction of the more solid and massive. The work continued to proceed slowly during 1954 with many paintings started and destroyed. and, as was normal during these periods of transition, the production of many drawings. Two key paintings were begun in 1954 and finished in 1955 —*Beggar's Joys* (no. 25) and *Room I* (no. 26). These resolved the temporary impasse and were followed during 1955 by two more large, important works, (*Bronze* and *For M*, no. 28). In all of these, the paint is built up, layer on layer to achieve a Renaissance density. Color is more brilliant than at any previous stage, with great crimson areas towards the center bursting forth from the rose and gray fields. Now for the first time large, black forms begin to interact with the reds to further that dialogue of color shapes which are becoming living presences. No conscious geometric construction seems to exist, but a sense of order, of structure does, a structure that is organic, that is rooted in the quality of life itself. The textures and brush strokes are rougher, more violent; there is, throughout, a turmoil of activity, of implied movement of forms which maintain their identity but participate in some mysterious action with other forms.

Guston is one of the few American painters associated with free abstraction who uses the entire paint vocabulary of the Renaissance and Baroque tradition including, as Dore Ashton has pointed out, the half tone to integrate the dominant colors with the effects of atmosphere.[12] The paintings of 1954-1955 combine a greater mass in the color shapes with a greater atmospheric depth. In completely contemporary terms they begin to take on the solidity of the old masters. *Room I* was given its title because the red and black forms seemed to the artist to exist in a tangible space.

Two more large paintings concluded the series. In *The Visit*, 1955, the forms are less weighty but more dynamic, more tilted, moving rapidly in and out of space. The untitled painting, 1955-56 (Teiger Collection, no. 30), quieter in mood, is again a summation of the experiments of the last several years.

In the fall of 1955, Guston moved back to New York and joined the Sidney Janis Gallery. He painted *The Visit* and the untitled Teiger picture and prepared for an exhibition at Janis in February, 1956. This exhibition finally brought to Guston the beginning of financial success, although he had to continue teaching to earn a living, until 1958. It is ironical that despite the fact that he had been recognized for years as a leading American artist, between 1941 and 1956 Guston had only sold eleven paintings. Between 1948 and 1956, after he had turned away from representation, he sold only two paintings, one to the Museum of Modern Art. Even in 1955 he was so impoverished that a friend was providing him with money for paints. The title of the painting, *Beggar's Joys*, reflects both his despondency at his beggar's condition and his exaltation in the final minutes of realizing the painting.

In 1956, Guston also showed eight paintings in the Museum of Modern Art's *12 Americans* exhibition; and more serious studies of his work began to appear. Leo Steinberg, discussing the *12 Americans* exhibition for *Arts*[13] saw Guston's paintings as "exposures of nerve-threaded flesh. It is as if the hollow of man's body—scarred and stained with sin and hunger, pain and nicotine—were flattened like an unrolled cylinder and clothes-pinned to the sky." He was reminded of Eliot's lines:

> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherized upon a table....

While analysing in some detail the development of Guston's structures, Steinberg was continually drawn back to associations, visceral and cosmic, anguished and joyful. Dore Ashton, writing in *Arts and Architecture*,[14] saw Guston as the leader of a new age of lyricism, of the supreme expression of the inner world of the individual. She also emphasized the conflicting elements, the violent union of opposites of which the pictures were built.

Since that time, Dore Ashton has devoted a number of excellent articles and a small book to Guston, and many other critics, including Irving Sandler, Lawrence Alloway, and Sam Hunter[15] have written at length about him. While their points of view obviously differ, they are unanimous in their attempts to penetrate the mystery of the paintings as subject paintings, as works whose power of evocation is so great that they can never be thought of simply as colors arranged abstractly on a flat surface. And this is just, since the paintings of Guston during the last six years have increasingly become stages on which an intense drama is acted out by protagonists who are living forms if not represented figures.

1956 produced three more brilliantly coloristic paintings, *The Street*,[16] *Voyage* (no. 31) and *Dial* (no. 32). In *Voyage*, the forms are massed in a highly articulated manner, even suggestive once again of cubist structure, but maintaining the spontaneity developed during the last few years. *Dial* has a more open, violent arrangement of the central colors, with active, strong but light red shapes pushing and pulling against blacks and greens, all enmeshed and interpenetrated by angry pinks of differing intensities. With *Prague*[17] Guston began working with darker colors, here massed in large, strong and regular shapes. This and *Painter's City*, 1956-1957 (no. 33), inaugurated another major change in both color and mood, an intensification of the dramatic conflict. The introduction of large areas of black marked an attempt to solve a formal problem —the presentation of black as an actual color which visually would hold its place on the picture plane and not sink into the background.[18] Even more important was the move to a more aggressive painting, filled with a conflict of tilted, rough, jagged shapes and brush strokes, contradictions and spatial tensions in which blacks move out in front of reds, foreground and background continually shift focus.

Fable I, 1956-1957 (no. 34), finished in January, 1957, introduces a predomi-

nantly blue black palette, shot through with vivid oranges and greens. Here the entire space tilts. The blue and black, orange and green color shapes become not only living forms but actually take on the quality of a crowd of figures circling in depth in a dance that is a battle. The increasing sense of metamorphosis in Guston's painting, the tug of war between conflicting forms becomes most evident here. Dore Ashton has referred to the interaction of *flux* and *stasis* as a central characteristic of the later works.[19] *Fable I* introduced a strong element of fantasy which continued to grow in *The Clock I* (no. 35) and in a number of small oils produced during the summer of 1957.

As noted above, Guston for many years had characteristically used drawing as a means of working out and clarifying his ideas about painting. Until 1954, he still did numbers of figure drawings (he was then still teaching figure drawing), but after 1949 most of them had dealt with abstract themes. He explored forms in his drawings as he did in his paintings, experimenting with the creation of masses without contour, as in painting he increasingly began to experiment with black as a color. Between 1954 and 1958 he produced few drawings, but from time to time he explored new ideas in terms of small paintings, oils, and for a period in 1958, gouaches. The small pictures had the obvious advantage that they could be done rapidly and directly. Individual forms could be isolated and their interactions made more emphatic. Ideas still nebulous could be played with, without the commitment of a large painting.[20] Thus the small oils and gouaches, like the drawings, are extremely important in frequently giving the first suggestion of themes later to be developed in major works.

The element of exuberant fantasy is particularly evident in the small oils of 1957 (e.g. *Fable II; The Clock II; Rite*, no. 38). *The Clock II* continues the dark palette of *Fable I*, but *Fable II* and *Rite* return to bright color with extensive use of brilliant gray-whites. The forms of all three take on grotesque and fantastic shapes, like monstrous battling insects with tentacles shooting off into space. The quality of the forms as images—of what, it is impossible to say—is now evident.

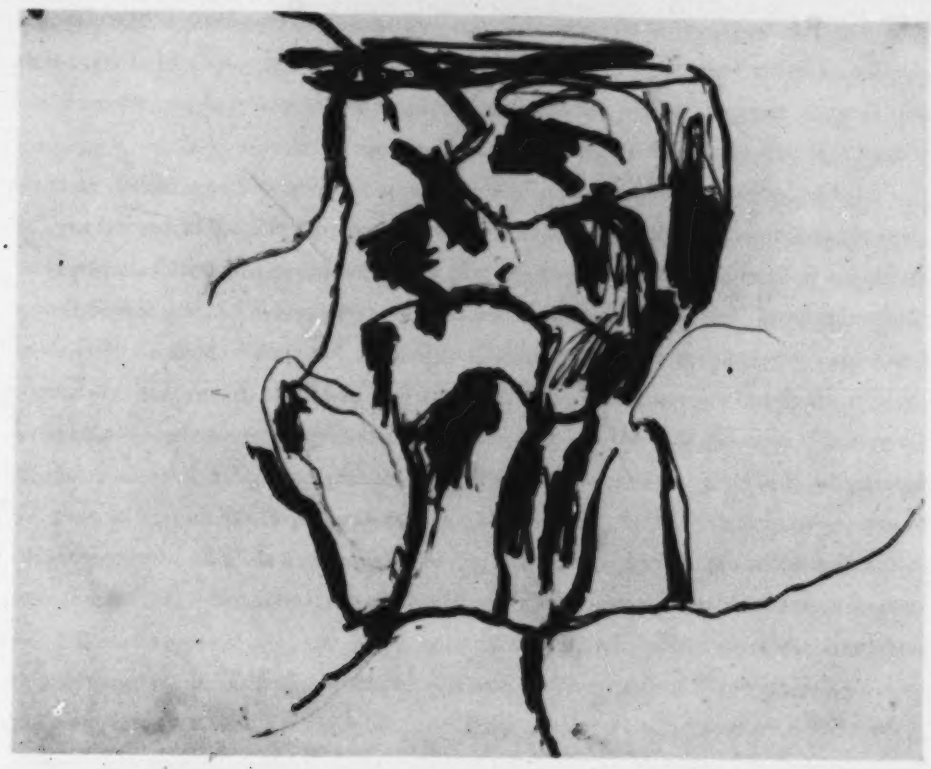
The excursion into dark painting, with heavy emphasis on powerful black shapes, was temporarily abandoned during the latter part of 1957. *Cythera* is a brilliant, light work, highly atmospheric, with more strongly colored forms clustered towards the bottom and seeming to compose themselves into figures. *The Mirror* (no. 40) is positive in color, with the great red shapes moving spatially across each other and together taking on the character of some massive structure or machine. In *Oasis* (no. 41), the tempo quickens and the forms whirl about in a luminous space. In these works the blacks have been largely eliminated except for an occasional accent. During all the summer and fall of 1957 and into 1958, Guston was painting well and rapidly, in pictures such as these seeming to summarize and synthesize many of his ideas of the last several years. In *Native's Return* (no. 42), painted late in the winter of 1957, with its strongly held, regular, compacted reds and blues, there is again a suggestion of a return to cubist organization without, however, the sense of cubist, diagrammatic space.

The last painting before the exhibition held at the Janis Gallery in February, 1958, was *Passage*, 1957-1958 (no. 43), finished in January. In color this is the lightest keyed and most brilliant of the entire group, scintillating blues and whites to which attach themselves strange, grasping shapes of reds and greens. The colors are heavily textured at the same time as the forms are more open and transparent. This and the other highly keyed paintings of the latter part of 1957, although all more solidly painted, recapture the mood of lightness and gaiety of the white paintings of 1952. The activity of the strong color forms, with their qualities of vitality and fantasy if anything increases the buoyancy of the mood.

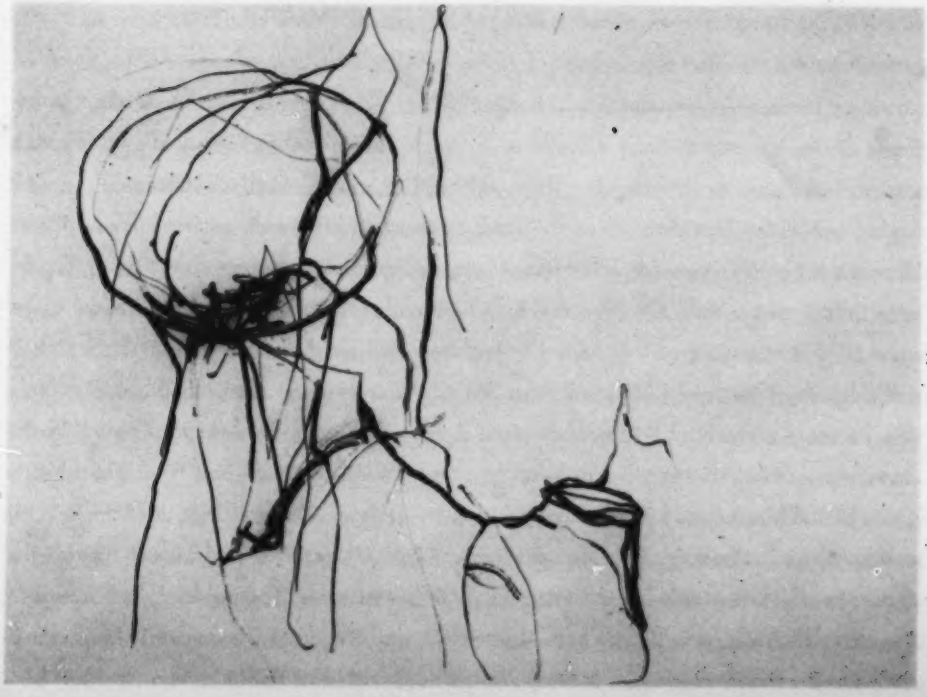
The 1958 exhibition at the Janis Gallery was received with enthusiasm by almost all the critics and resulted in further serious studies of the artist[21]. After the customary interval for reflection and re-examination of his work which follows every one-man exhibition, Guston began to paint again in the late winter and spring. He produced in rapid succession three large paintings which seemed to represent a reaction against the brilliant paintings of the show. These were *Sleeper I*,[22] *Nile* and *To Fellini* (no. 45). They are still rich in color but much more sombre and suggestive of a darker, heavier mood. Black forms are reintroduced to take a dominant part in the drama. In *To Fellini* a whole network of clearly articulated but closely joined individual blacks swarm over the reds and blues as though intent on devouring them. Only two strong green shapes at the edge seem safe from the menace. In these paintings and those that immediately followed them the drama of conflict which for some years had existed in Guston's use of color shapes, began to become explicit. With this also became explicit all the questions which must be asked concerning his place as an abstractionist, as a figurative painter, as a painter of subject or mood, or ideas. Guston himself has many times spoken eloquently and passionately on these problems, and perhaps some of his words can best be paraphrased.[23]

He does not think of himself as an abstract painter or a realist. Abstract painting which is primarily concerned with problems of construction or formal relationships has no longer any interest for him. He becomes impatient when his works are criticized or analysed essentially in structural terms, in terms of "forms arranged within space against an atmospheric background." He continues to be much concerned with questions of pictorial space and problems of structure, but only when he is not actually painting. Then he only seeks a condition in which the work grows under his hand in terms of the manner in which forms come into existence and begin to act upon, to have an effect on other forms, which in their turn are acting upon still others. During this process he is not involved with foreground or background or arrangement of forms for any deliberate effect of balance or symmetry or spatial existence. These, the normally described 'formal elements' exist, but they exist as a consequence of the life of the forms.

He gauges the success of his painting by the variety and complexity of the interaction of the forms. If a form has only a single relation to another he regards it as unsuc-



Drawing No. 20. 1958. Lent by the artist.



Drawing No. 29. 1960. Lent by the artist.

cessful and scrapes it out or changes its position and context. This sense of the complex relation of living forms is something which he learned from his study of Renaissance and Baroque masters. In this definition he is willing to accept the designation of 'abstractionist' as he feels that in this definition they were abstract.

Although, on the other hand, he does not think of himself as a realist, he is always concerned with the objective world, frequently quite literally. When searching for an idea or a direction, a starting point, he will sometimes begin to paint the contents of his studio, the objects on his painting table, the scene outside his window. These excursions into representation he enjoys and finds refreshing, but then he begins to feel them unsatisfactory and even unreal. To paint a figure or a table or a tree so that it is simply recognizable seems an incomplete act. This is merely the repetition of the known, and to him the act of painting is the exploration of the unknown, the rapid moving from object to non-object to force new relations which he had not suspected were there. The painting is finished when object and non-object, representation and abstract means are submerged and participate in a totality of hitherto unknown relationships which are immediately recognizable by their familiarity.

The approach to his painting which is here suggested is one towards which Guston had been moving at least since 1952. It is not a consciously arrived at position any more than the paintings are consciously constructed. Its verbalization is actually a recognition after the fact of an exploration in which his painting has been involved for many years. Obviously this approach is not one to which he has held with absolute consistency over the years; nor is it one to which he can be expected to hold without modification in the future. But an understanding of it is essential to all the later work up to the present, no matter what changes may be rung within that work.

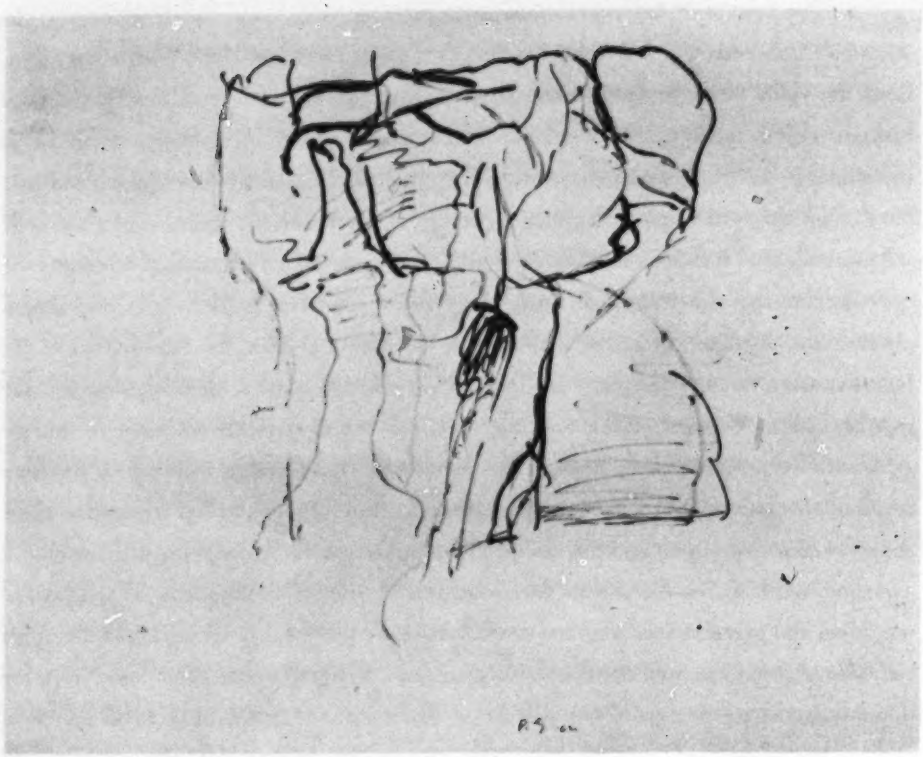
The three large paintings of early 1958 were followed by two small oils, *Spring I* and *Spring II*, and then by a series of fifteen small gouaches. The gouache medium was explored as a sort of refresher from oil painting, and particularly because its quick drying properties lent themselves to rapid exploration of a wide variety of new ideas. Here the generally more simplified forms suggest figures or trees or plants, living organisms though not specifically identifiable, which embrace, repulse, attack, swallow up or spew forth one another. *Mott* (no. 49) is dominated by a menacing monster, which is still a figure of fun and which has been described as an elephant-headed spider. *Actor* (no. 53) is a comedy of odd protagonists. A black, elongated mushroom figure in the center spews forth (or is swallowed up by) an undulent red figure at the right while a green hatted black dwarf shrinks away (or attacks) from the left. The title *Actor* as well as other titles in the series (*Scene*, *Last Piece*, *Tivoli*, *Room*, *Summerhouse*) suggest the degree in which Guston's forms have become living realities. The painting has become a stage on which the form-figures act out comedies and tragedies whose poetic language is the paint itself and whose plot is the painter's exploration of the unknown.

The results of the experiments with gouache were immediately evident in the large and small oils which followed during the rest of 1958 and 1959. With a few exceptions the color tends to the sombre, black and red forms with occasional passages of brilliant green, moving within areas of blue grays, brushed in violently. At times, in these later pictures, Guston seems to be abrogating all the qualities of elegance and brilliant color which had first brought him success. However, as the recent works are studied more clearly, it is seen that they are not a negation but an affirmation of constantly new and unexpected dramas of forms, new and unexpected spatial, color and atmospheric relationships. The sense of life grows constantly greater, the interactions of the forms constantly more intricate. In *Poet*, 1958, (no. 59) a great black claw engulfs the reds and blues. *Grove I*, 1959, (no. 63) is one of the most richly coloristic of this period, with deep but dazzling blues, reds, and greens, shot through with yellow passages forming themselves into a large rectangular structure. From the top a massive black shape weighs down upon and threatens to destroy the others. Among the many small oils executed in 1959, *Traveler I* (no. 68) is an exotic oriental architecture of rectangular red, blue, and green shapes weighed down by an even more massive black over the upper red. *Wintergreen I* is dominated by a single, black, triangular shape that rises from the bottom almost to the top of the picture, a black tornado swallowing small forms of orange and green.

Winter Flower, 1959 (no. 71) has a vivid red form and an equally vivid blue bisected by a long, diagonal stem which moves across a strong green to end in a great black over orange flower which rests its weary head on a cloud-like gray. This painting illustrates the degree in which the general sobriety of the later works intensifies the vibration of the accents of brilliant color when these are used. The red and blue and green burst forth from the murk that surrounds them and the use of strong color under the blacks and grays makes these glow with an inner light.

The last large painting of 1959, *Painter I* (no. 72), develops themes of the small oils. A black, machine-like form is capped by a blood red shape and enmeshed in a labyrinth of writhing gray brush strokes, through which in parts shine strong greens and blues and entangled pinks.

The life of his forms had now become so involved with Guston's subconscious that at times they became the objective reality. They had begun to lead their real life in a real space which existed before he put his brush on the canvas. As he painted, he felt that his primary task was not additive but subtractive, the elimination of extraneous elements until the figures and their drama were revealed.[24] He was painting rapidly and continuously and increasingly felt that he was living in the painting. As the forms shifted from place to place, were scraped out, reconstituted, developed new relationships with other forms, they acquired a past, a history which became part of their existence and motivation in the finished work.



Drawing No. 31. 1962. Lent by the artist.

III

1960 and 1961 have been unusually productive years for Guston, despite the interruptions of two exhibitions at the Janis Gallery and a three month trip to Europe in the summer of 1960. Characteristically, most of the European trip was devoted to an intensive tour of Umbria to restudy Piero della Francesca and to see those works he had not previously known at first hand.

Traveler II, painted in March-April, 1960, in its black and gray murkiness through which shine accents of brilliant green and red, its roughly brushed over-all texture, sets the mood for most of the recent paintings. The darkness of these works, the submergence of bright color, the avoidance of all the qualities of lightness and elegance which had characterized earlier works, these elements have been equated to a darkness of mood, the expression of some inner torment of the artist. It is a fact that these later works have a curious affinity to the earliest abstractions, such as *Tormentors* and *Review*,

in the dominance of blacks or muddy grays and blues, confining strong colors which struggle to escape; as well as in the almost uncouth roughness of the paint handling. Whether this denotes a stage of major transition it is as yet impossible to say. It will be recalled that in 1956-1957, Guston experimented with a series of dark paintings which anticipated much of the rough, violent quality of the most recent works, and then in the latter part of 1957 returned to a full and brilliant palette. At the present time, the artist seems unaware of any hidden 'anguish' or subconscious urge to establish a new direction. Whenever he is struggling with all the problems of a new painting, whatever its characteristics or mood may be, he suffers all the pains of doubt and uncertainty. However, when the parts begin to fall into place, the painting to resolve itself, he experiences the same exultation whether the work itself is light and elegant or dark and violent.

At least from 1941 it is possible to trace in Guston's paintings an alternation of mood between the lyrical, romantic, richly painted, sensuously appealing, on the one hand; and the sombre, the violent, and the discordant, on the other. These alternations undoubtedly reflect conflicts within the artist, whether or not these conflicts have to do directly with the problems of painting. Guston, of course, is most aware of those conscious conflicts arising from the continual exploration in his work of new and unknown relationships.

Whatever may be the immediate or the ultimate *raison d'être* for the recent work, there is no question that it represents the most completely logical summation of all the experiments with living forms and their interactions, which have obsessed him at least since 1953. Brilliant surface color, at least for the moment, has ceased to be important to him, although he frequently begins a painting in strong hues, then to scrape these down or paint over them. This fact may explain the sense of a continuing subterranean light which pervades even the darkest paintings, as it does those of Rembrandt or Goya. Clearly defined local color is avoided; large, closely keyed, positive forms of black, dark red, sombre orange, or grayed blues are unified in a general tonality. Guston has increasingly become obsessed with the idea of the paint as a living object, as the paint on a hand by Rembrandt is always the paint itself, no matter how brilliantly it may describe the hand.

Traveler III, 1960 (no. 74), possibly an outgrowth of *Winter Flower*, 1959, is dominated by a great tree form spinning with cyclone violence on a slender stem. The stem has a curious sort of foot which gives the tree-shape the appearance of advancing on the black and gray forms to the left. These positive forms are encompassed in a streaming veil of brush strokes which suddenly at the right open to a triangle of black and mysterious depth. Originally, the entire top of the painting was red and this was gradually eliminated until finally the black over red tree-shape emerged.

The sense of the canvas as a place, a stage on which dramas are enacted by living forms becomes strongest in the most recent painting. Titles suggesting actual places

recur frequently (*Interior I*, 1960; *Room III*, 1960; *Composer's Landscape: To M.F.*, 1960; *Garden of M*, 1960),[25] although some of these together with various *Sleepers* also have reference to periods when the artist was living in his studio, working around the clock, catching fragments of sleep when he was exhausted. From time to time, Guston has continued his habit of painting directly objects in his studio or on his painting table, then to see how far he can go in eliminating the representational elements (e.g. *Table*, 1960, no. 77 and *Blue Table*, 1960, no. 81). The vestiges of the objects together with the titles of these paintings have caused considerable speculation on the part of some critics as to whether he is now on the verge of abandoning abstraction and returning to the figure.[26] It might equally be well argued that he has never been an abstractionist but has always been involved in subject painting. Whether the subjects will ever again be clear representations of objective nature will probably depend on whether he can ever again find a reason for painting a figure or a landscape. At the present time, the painting of a 'likeness' still seems to him to be an irrelevance.

Alchemist, 1960 (no. 78) carries through a dominant blue tonality into which highly irregular black and dark red forms are assimilated to make of the entire paint area a single color shape framed in areas of primed canvas. The whole painting pivots about a single, regular, egg-shaped dark blue, a form in orbit which both holds the surface and opens up the painting to an illimitable depth. This regular ovoid form appeared by itself in the process of painting, and the artist was so intrigued by the manner in which it controlled, in an almost magical way (hence, *Alchemist*) the total picture space, that he has utilized variants in a number of subsequent works. These circular or ovoid shapes frequently take on a quality of personal fantasy; they become at times celestial objects, apparitions, or decapitated heads rolling on a hill (e.g. *Garden of M*, 1960).

Composer's Landscape: To M.F., 1960, was painted in the fall at Woodstock after the return from Europe, and still has reminiscences of actual fall landscapes with which he experimented as he began painting again. However, it also becomes an interaction of tree-like black and red shapes embracing one another; as well as a reflection of a revived interest in spatial and architectural problems brought about by his pilgrimage to the Urbino of Piero.

The February, 1961, exhibition at the Janis Gallery was highly controversial.[27] It was disturbing for the artist not so much because of the controversy, but because to him it seemed to be one of his most profoundly personal statements. The sense of his forms as living presences, composed of paint which was a living essence, and existing within the canvas which was an actual place, seemed to him to have become completely

explicit. After the exhibition he was not able to paint again until June, but then during the summer and fall he produced rapidly four large paintings and a number of small ones. In these there is a still further development of the drama of paint on the stage of the canvas. *Duo*, 1961, (no. 91) is dominated by two great black personages in conclave in a miasmic gray setting. The figures open and close, that to the right over grayed but luminous reds; that to the left interpenetrated by the gray of the setting and peering forth from a brilliant green eye. The black personages stand forth from a limited but very tangible depth composed of the grays that go under and through the blacks; blues, oranges and pinks that go under the floating grays. Each brush stroke vibrates with life as the total mass of the strokes bind together every part of the picture into an entity.

The Tale, 1961, (no. 89) and *Close-Up III*, 1961 (no. 90) both suggest the dramatic interplay of the protagonists and the architecture of the stage itself. *The Tale* is richer and more varied in color; the gesticulating black shapes stand out in silhouette from the gray curtain; brilliant oranges, blues, pinks, reds, scintillate everywhere in the background of the more tonal blues and grays. The tempo of the drama has here accelerated into a frenzy of climactic action. *Close-Up III* is more sombre in mood, dominated in the center by a black shape like a catafalque. If *Duo* is the exposition, *The Tale*, the development, then *Close-Up III* is the tragic resolution.

The sense of a continuing drama, a three act tragedy, which one derives from these three paintings seen together, may be purely accidental, a subjective reading on the part of the spectator. However, it is curious and interesting to note that the large paintings were followed in October of 1961, immediately before Guston returned to New York, by four small oils, painted in four or five days, to which he gave the titles *Actor I*, *Actor II*, *Actor III*, and *Actor IV* (nos. 92-95). And these he did think of quite consciously as four acts or situations, which together made up four stages of a drama.

The painting of Philip Guston has shown a great variety but a remarkably consistent development over the last twenty-five years. Even when he made the major change from recognizable subject to abstraction, the relations of the abstract works to the representational ones were perhaps more significant than the differences. At no time during his entire career has he been solely interested in formal or structural problems to the exclusion of subject or expressive content. He is now in mid-career, painting with furious energy, enlarging his vocabulary and exploring new ideas. It may be expected that in his future work the range and variety demonstrated in the past will be further expanded; and it may also be expected that the underlying theme, the dialogue between subject and abstract structure will continue.

FOOTNOTES

1. The terms "figurative", "abstractionist", and "abstract expressionist" are here used in their generally understood definitions. "Figurative" painting involves the use of figures or other recognizable subject matter taken from nature. "Abstract" painting eliminates all recognizable natural objects and traditionally emphasizes the formal or structural elements. "Abstract expressionism" has introduced into abstract painting the element of emotion expressed through the abstract means of color, line, brush texture, isolated forms of color shapes, etc. The application to Guston's works of these definitions is discussed at length in this paper. The word "form", in its specific sense, (*a* form *within* a painting rather than *the* form *of* a painting) has reference to a clearly defined color shape.

2. Guston has recently discovered that the Queensbridge Housing Project mural has been completely repainted by some unknown hand. He is now attempting to have his name removed from the mural or to see whether it is possible to have it restored.

3. Before 1941, Guston had painted no more than seven or eight easel pictures, including a *Mother and Child*, c. 1930, and the Ku Klux Klan painting, *Conspiracy*, 1932, *Bombardment*, 1937, and the picture of fighting children, 1940, referred to below. The easel paintings of the Thirties, when the self-taught artist was still learning his craft, were still in the category of student efforts. His first works as a professional artist he considers to be the murals of the late Thirties and early Forties.

   Although he had left the Project in 1941, the mural for the Social Security Building in Washington, a commission granted by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts, was not actually completed until 1942, nor installed until 1943. This was the consequence of the long interval between the original cartoons which he presented in 1939 and the final awarding of the commission.

4. Interview with the artist, January, 1962.

5. H. W. Janson, "Philip Guston," *The Magazine of Art*, Washington, D.C., no. 40, February, 1947, p. 54. This article and Janson's earlier article, "'Martial Memory' by Philip Guston and American Painting Today," *St. Louis Museum Bulletin*, St. Louis, vol. 27, nos. 3-4, 1942, pp. 34-41, are the most important studies of the figurative paintings of the Forties.

6. Guston frequently uses the same title for different paintings distinguishing them by numbers (e.g. *Somersault* and *Somersault II*). The title of the first painting sometimes includes a number and sometimes does not. For consistency in this paper, the first painting in the series is given a number.

7. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Roy R. Neuberger, New York. Not in exhibition.

8. Interview with the artist, January, 1962.

9. Most of the paintings for this year were numbered rather than given titles, a procedure which Guston abandoned the following year. See *Painting No. 6*, 1952, (no. 20) and *Painting No. 10*, 1952.

10. "Guston paints from area to area until the forms have battled with and partaken of one another—until he has suffered them. He works in a condition of mounting 'tension provoked by the contradictions...in painting.' As the forms 'shed their minor relations and confront each other more nakedly' he reaches a 'state of "unfreedom" where only certain things can happen, (where) unaccountably the unknown and the free must appear.' Culminating in a total vision—which is the earned moment—Guston breaks the shackles of past categories, and the urgencies within himself are free to find their own shape; the image begins to 'pull' for its own 'light', 'its sense of place.' The paradoxes no longer withstand solution; the forms maintain their identity yet charge all other forms in a new, unpredicted way. The structure emerges only as an end result, the function of the equilibrium achieved. Guston says that, 'what is seen and called a picture is what remains—an evidence.' The painting crosses 'the narrow passage from a diagramming to that other state—a corporeality.' It ceases to be the subjective extension of the artist and becomes a presence, a sudden oneness that cannot be translated back into its parts.

"When Guston confronts a finished canvas, he feels he has revealed an organism that has always existed. He is surprised both at its familiarity and at its newness. Surprise is the crucial element. It is not enough to say 'that expresses exactly how I feel'; he insists on being able to say 'I never knew I felt like that.' Ultimately, each painting becomes a trap to be eluded; the unknown remains; the 'drama of the process' must be repeated." Irving Sandler, "Guston: A Long Voyage Home," *Art News*, New York, vol. 58, no. 8, December, 1959, p. 65.

11. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Heller, New York. Not in exhibition.

12. Dore Ashton, *Philip Guston*, New York, Grove Press, 1959, pp. 51-56. See also articles by her in *Arts and Architecture* (bibliography *passim*) and in *Metro*, Milan, no. 3, 1962, pp. 33-41.

13. Leo Steinberg, "Fritz Glarner and Philip Guston Among '12 Americans' at the Museum of Modern Art," *Arts*, New York, vol. 30, June, 1956, pp. 42-45.

14. Dore Ashton, "Art: The Age of Lyricism," *Arts and Architecture*, Los Angeles, vol. 73, no. 3, March, 1956, pp. 14-15, 43-44.

15. See bibliography.

16. Collection of Mr. Harvey Kaplan, Chicago. Not in exhibition.

17. Collection of Mr. Arnold Maremont, Chicago. Not in exhibition.

18. At various periods, Guston has concentrated on a single color, using it in a great variety of ways in order to discover all its potentialities. Thus, in the mid-Fifties, he exploited reds and recently has been using a brilliant green for many of his key color shapes.

19. Dore Ashton, "Art," *Arts and Architecture*, Los Angeles, vol. 75, no. 5, May, 1958, p. 29; Irving Sandler, "Guston: A Long Voyage Home," *Art News*, New York, vol. 58, no. 8, December, 1959, p. 36.

20. Guston never paints larger than approximately 6 to 6½′ square, since he does not like the idea of moving from place to place in order to cover a canvas.

21. See bibliography—1958.

22. Collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art. Not in exhibition.

23. Interview with the artist, January, 1962.

24. Michelangelo expressed much the same idea in relation to sculpture.

25. It should be noted that the paintings to which Guston gives the same title and numbers *(Room I, Room II, Room III)* may have nothing to do with one another stylistically or in subject treatment. It is in fact usually the case that the "room" in each instance is a room in a different context.

26. See John Canaday, "Vote of Confidence," *New York Times*, New York, February 19, 1961.

27. John Canaday and Irving Sandler were favorable, while Emily Genauer and Sidney Tillim were unfavorable. See bibliography—1961.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted, paintings are lent by the artist.

1. MARTIAL MEMORY. 1941. Oil on canvas, 39¾ x 32⅛".
   Collection City Art Museum of St. Louis.

2. SANCTUARY. 1944. Oil on canvas, 22⅛ x 35⅞".

3. IF THIS BE NOT I. 1945. Oil on canvas, 41¾ x 55½".
   Collection Washington University, St. Louis.

4. SOMERSAULT I. 1945. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30".
   Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Monica, New York.

5. PORCH I. 1946-47. Oil on canvas, 56⅛ x 34".
   Collection Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana.

6. PORCH II. 1947. Oil on canvas, 62½ x 43⅛".
   Collection Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York.

7. UNTITLED. 1947. Oil on canvas, 11 x 9".
   Collection Fletcher Martin, Woodstock, New York.

8. TORMENTORS. 1947-48. Oil on canvas, 40¾ x 60⅛".

9. REVIEW. 1948-49. Oil on canvas, 39⅜ x 59".

10. UNTITLED. 1949. Gouache, 15¼ x 22¼".

11. RED PAINTING. 1950. Oil on canvas, 34 x 62⅛".

12. PAINTING NO. 6. 1951. Oil on canvas, 31⅛ x 45⅞".

13. OCHRE PAINTING I. 1951. Oil on canvas, 28⅞ x 45¾".
Collection Mrs. George Poindexter, New York.

14. WHITE PAINTING I. 1951. Oil on canvas, 57⅞ x 61⅞".

15. WHITE PAINTING II. 1951. Oil on canvas, 50 x 50⅞".
Collection Mrs. William A. Pedlar, New York.

16. OCHRE PAINTING II. 1951. Oil on canvas, 41 x 47".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Olin J. Stephens II, Scarsdale, New York.

17. THE BELL. 1952. Oil on canvas, 46 x 39¾".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Fred Neisner, Rochester, New York.

18. TO B.W.T. 1952. Oil on canvas, 48 x 51".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brown, Springfield, Massachusetts.

19. PAINTING. 1952. Oil on canvas, 48 x 50¾".
Collection Mrs. Albert H. Newman, Chicago.

20. PAINTING NO. 6. 1952. Oil on canvas, 48¼ x 36".
Collection Department of Art, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls.

21. PAINTING NO. 9. 1952. Oil on canvas, 48⅛ x 60¼".
Collection Sophie and Boris Leavitt, Hanover, Pennsylvania.

22. PAINTING NO. 10. 1952. Oil on canvas, 51 x 48".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Morton Neumann, Chicago.

23. ATTAR. 1953. Oil on canvas, 48½ x 46".
Collection Morton Feldman, New York.

24. PAINTING. 1954. Oil on canvas, 63¼ x 60¼".
Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip C. Johnson.

25. BEGGAR'S JOYS. 1954-55. Oil on canvas, 71⅜ x 68⅛".
Collection Sophie and Boris Leavitt, Hanover, Pennsylvania.

26. ROOM I. 1954-55. Oil on canvas, 71⅜ x 60".
Lent by Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

27. BRONZE. 1955. Oil on canvas, 76⅛ x 73".
Collection The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

28. FOR M. 1955. Oil on canvas, 76⅜ x 72¼".
Private Collection, Los Angeles.

29. THE VISIT. 1955. Oil on canvas, 68½ x 58⅝".
Collection Mrs. Meyer Kestnbaum, Chicago.

30. UNTITLED. 1955-56. Oil on canvas, 75⅜ x 72".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. David A. Teiger, West Orange, New Jersey.

31. VOYAGE. 1956. Oil on canvas, 71⅞ x 76⅛".
Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Seymour H. Knox.

32. DIAL. 1956. Oil on canvas, 72 x 76¼".
Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

33. PAINTER'S CITY. 1956-57. Oil on canvas, 65 x 77".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. I. Donald Grossman, New York.

34. FABLE I. 1956-57. Oil on canvas, 64⅞ x 76".
Collection Washington University, St. Louis.

35. THE CLOCK I. 1957. Oil on canvas, 76 x 64".
Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Bliss Parkinson.

36. FABLE II. 1957. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 24⅝ x 35¾".

37. THE CLOCK II. 1957. Oil on pressed wood, 24¾ x 35⅞".
Collection Eric Estorick, London.

38. RITE. 1957. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 24⅝ x 35½".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

39. CYTHERA. 1957. Oil on canvas, 72⅛ x 63¾".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Blinken, New York.

40. THE MIRROR. 1957. Oil on canvas, 68⅞ x 61".
Collection Joseph H. Hazen, New York.

41. OASIS. 1957. Oil on canvas, 61⅜ x 68".
Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection, New York.

42. NATIVE'S RETURN. 1957. Oil on canvas, 64⅞ x 75⅞".
The Phillips Collection, Washington, D. C.

43. PASSAGE. 1957-58. Oil on canvas, 65 x 74".
Collection Mrs. Phyllis B. Lambert, New York.

44. NILE. 1958. Oil on canvas, 65 x 75⅜".
Collection Mrs. Thomas W. Blake, Jr., Dallas.

45. TO FELLINI. 1958. Oil on canvas, 69 x 74".
Private Collection, New York.

46. SPRING I. 1958. Oil on board, 21⅞ x 29¾".

47. SPRING II. 1958. Oil on board, 21⅞ x 29⅞".

48. SUMMERHOUSE. 1958. Gouache, 22 x 30".
Collection Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Brodsky, New York.

49. MOTT. 1958. Gouache, 22¾ x 28¾".
Collection Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Alpers, Los Angeles.

50. RED BLACK. 1958. Gouache, 20 x 29⅞".

51. SCENE. 1958. Gouache, 21⅞ x 29⅞".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

52. TIVOLI. 1958. Gouache, 21⅞ x 29⅞".
Collection F. H. Kissner, New York.

53. ACTOR. 1958. Gouache, 22¾ x 28⅝".

54. THE ROOM. 1958. Gouache, 21⅞ x 29⅞".

55. LAST PIECE. 1958. Gouache, 21⅞ x 29⅞".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

56. THE RETURN. 1956-58. Oil on canvas, 70 x 78".
Lent by the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.

57. UNTITLED. 1958. Oil on canvas, 64 x 75⅛".

58. SLEEPER II. 1958-59. Oil on canvas, 68 x 65".
Lent by Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

59. POET. 1958. Oil on canvas, 63⅞ x 52".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Morris H. Grossman, New York.

60. CLOSE-UP I. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 23⅜ x 28⅜".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Leon A. Mnuchin, New York.

61. WARWICK I. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 22⅜ x 29¾".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

62. AUGUST 23. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 23¼ x 29".

63. GROVE I. 1959. Oil on canvas, 69 x 72⅛".
Collection Lee V. Eastman, Scarsdale, New York.

64. PATH I. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 31 x 40½".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

65. TURN. 1959. Oil on board, 22⅝ x 28½".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

66. WILD GRAPE. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 22⅝ x 28¼".

67. CLOSE-UP II. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 23⅛ x 29".

68. TRAVELER I. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 31⅞ x 32¼".

69. ROAD. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 22⅛ x 29¾".

70. WINTERGREEN I. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 31⅞ x 32¼".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. James Roemer, Warren, Ohio.

71. WINTER FLOWER. 1959. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 30⅞ x 40½".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Weisman, Los Angeles.

72. PAINTER I. 1959. Oil on canvas, 65 x 69".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. J. Daniel Weitzman, New York.

73. TRAVELER II. 1960. Oil on canvas, 65 x 73".
Lent by Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

74. TRAVELER III. 1959-60. Oil on canvas, 65 x 72".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Blinken, New York.

75. ROOM III. 1960. Oil on board, 29¾ x 37¼".

76. SLEEPER III. Oil on board, 29⅞ x 40".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Carlo M. Grossman, New York.

77. TABLE. 1960. Oil on board, 30 x 40".
Collection The Baltimore Museum of Art.

78. ALCHEMIST. 1960. Oil on canvas, 61 x 67".
Collection The Michener Foundation, Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

79. PATH III. 1960. Oil on canvas, 64⅛ x 76⅛".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

80. FALL. 1960. Oil on paper, 22¼ x 28⅛".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Reis, New York.

81. BLUE TABLE. 1960. Oil on paper, 42¾ x 32¾".

82. PAINTER II. 1959-60. Oil on canvas, 69 x 57".

83. COMPOSER'S LANDSCAPE: TO M. F. 1960. Oil on canvas, 49 x 47".

84. SEPTEMBER. 1960. Oil on board, 29⅞ x 38⅞".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

85. VESSEL. 1960. Oil on board, 30 x 21⅞".

86. EDGE. 1960. Oil on canvas, 68 x 76".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

87. GARDEN OF M. 1960. Oil on canvas, 68 x 78".
Lent by Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

88. HILL. 1961. Oil on paper mounted on pressed wood, 40 x 30¼".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

89. THE TALE. 1961. Oil on canvas, 68⅛ x 72".

90. CLOSE-UP III. 1961. Oil on canvas, 70 x 72".
Collection Lee V. Eastman, Scarsdale, New York.

91. DUO. 1961. Oil on canvas, 72¼ x 68".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

92. THE ACTORS I. 1961. Oil on board, 29⅞ x 39⅞".

93. THE ACTORS II. 1961. Oil on board, 30 x 40".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

94. THE ACTORS III. 1961. Oil on board, 29⅞ x 39⅞".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

95. THE ACTORS IV. 1961. Oil on board, 30 x 40".

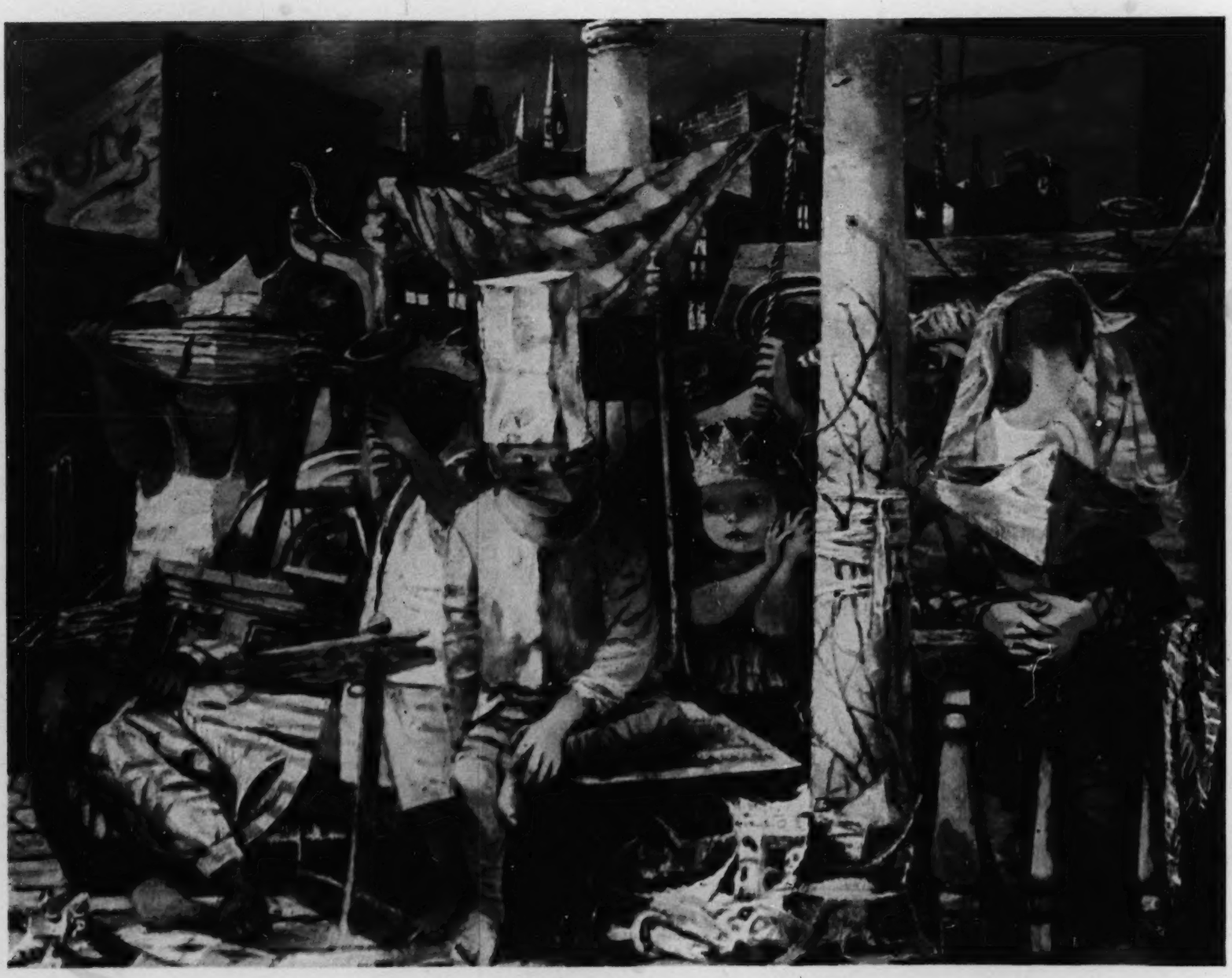
96. THE SCALE. 1961. Oil on canvas, 76 x 74⅞".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

97. NORTH. 1961-62. Oil on canvas, 69 x 77".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

98. UNTITLED. 1962. Oil on canvas, 68 x 78".
Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

1. Martial Memory. 1941. Collection City Art Museum of St. Louis.

2. Sanctuary. 1944. Lent by the artist.



3. If This Be Not I. 1945. Collection Washington University, St. Louis.

6. Porch II. 1947. Collection Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York.

8. *Tormentors*, 1947-48. *Lent by the artist.*

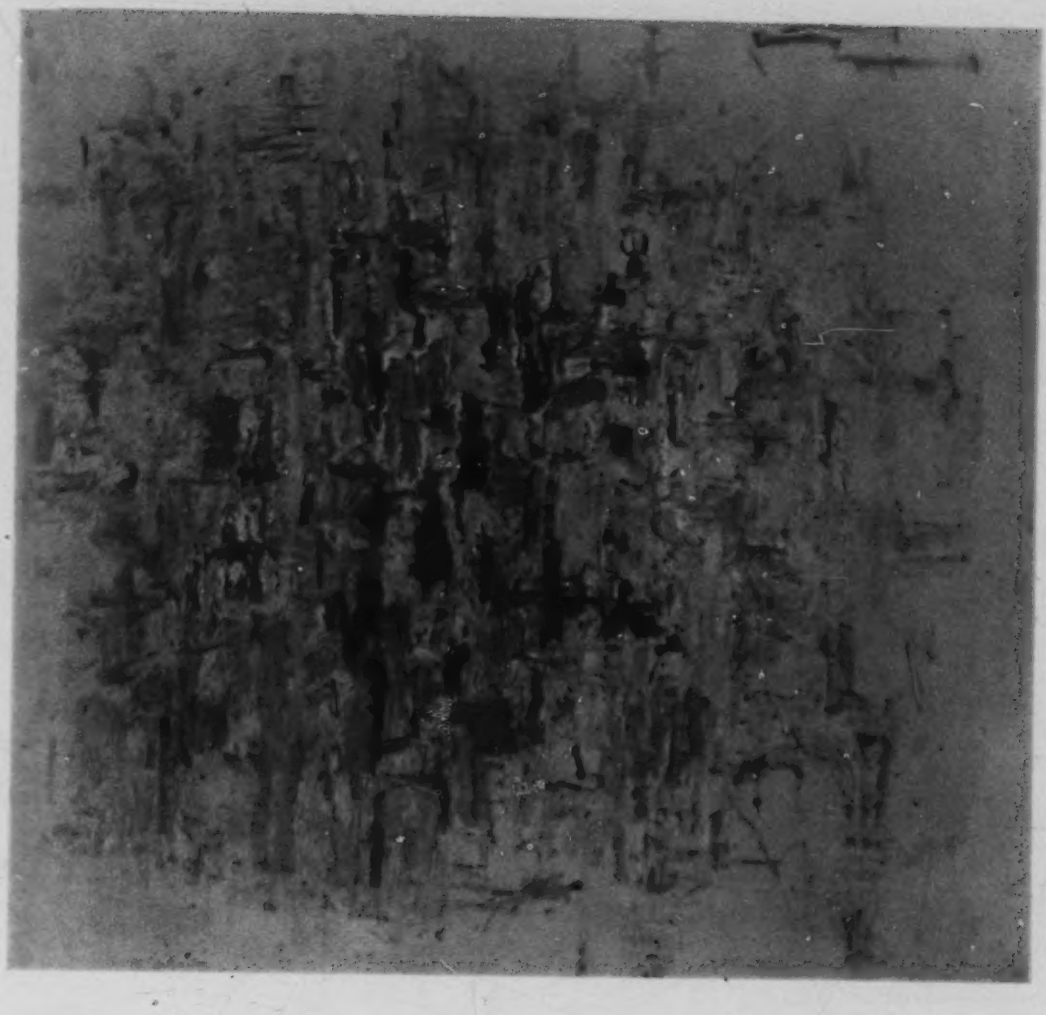
9. Review. 1948-49. Lent by the artist.

10. Untitled. 1949. Lent by the artist.

11. Red Painting. 1950. Lent by the artist.

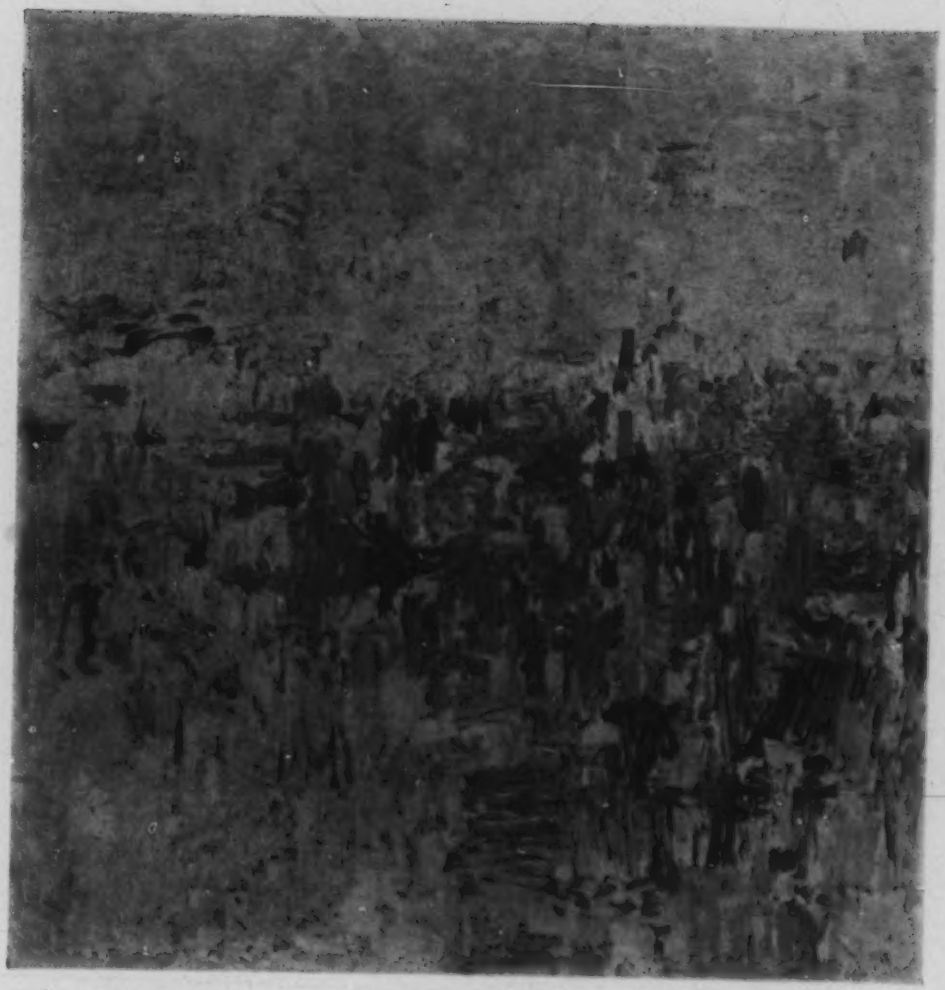
14. White Painting I. 1951. Lent by the artist.

18. *To B.W.T.* 1952. *Collection Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Brown, Springfield, Massachusetts.*

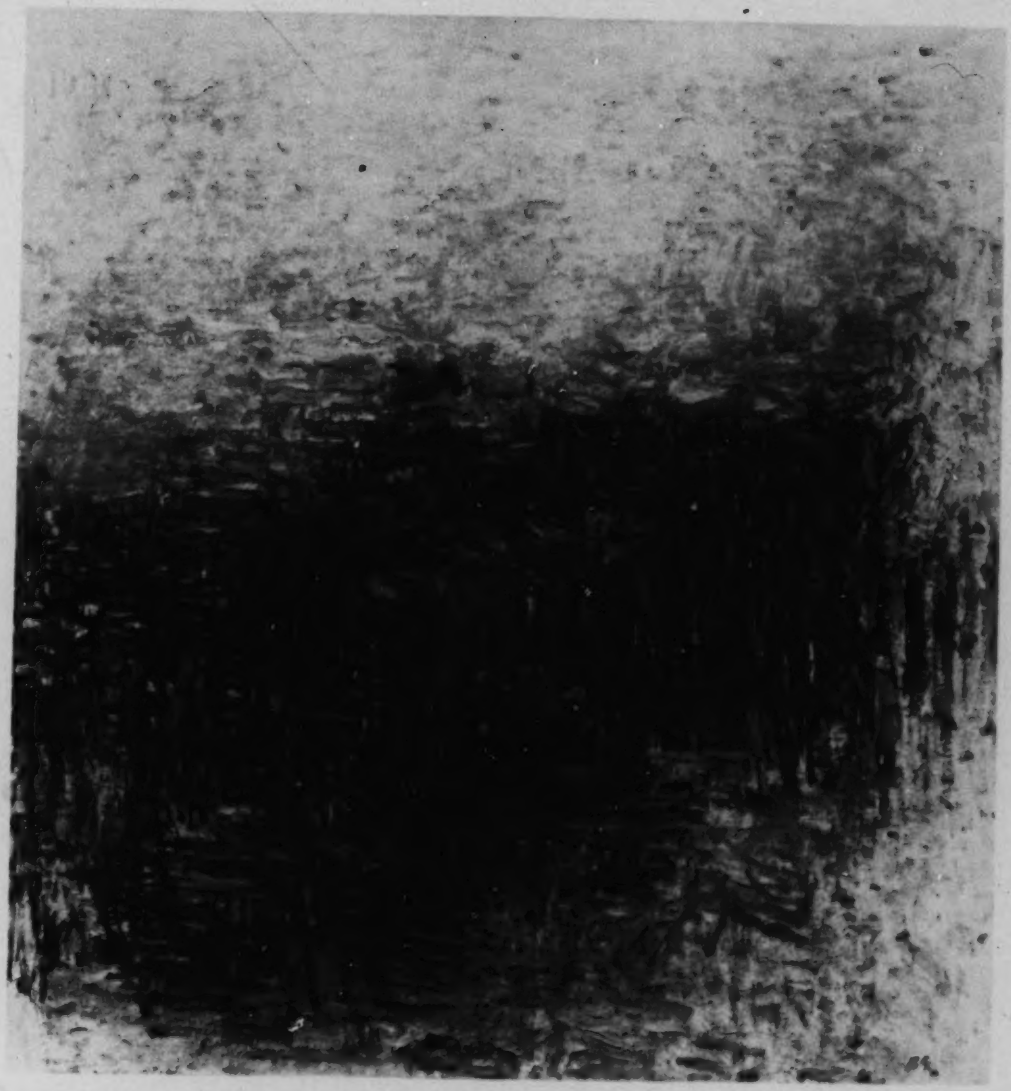


19. Painting. 1952. Collection Mrs. Albert H. Newman, Chicago.

20. Painting No. 6. 1952. Collection Department of Art, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls.



23. Attar. 1953. Collection Morton Feldman, New York.



24. Painting. 1954. Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Philip C. Johnson.

25. Beggar's Joys. 1954-55. Collection Sophie and Boris Leavitt, Hanover, Pennsylvania.

26. The Room. 1954-55. Lent by Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles.

28. For M. 1955. Private Collection, Los Angeles.

30. Untitled. 1955-56. Collection Mr. and Mrs. David A. Teiger, West Orange, New Jersey.

31. Voyage. 1956. Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York. Gift of Seymour H. Knox.

32. Dial. 1956. Collection Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

33. *Painter's City*. 1956-57. Collection Mr. and Mrs. I. Donald Grossman, New York.

34. Fable I. 1956-57. Collection Washington University, St. Louis.

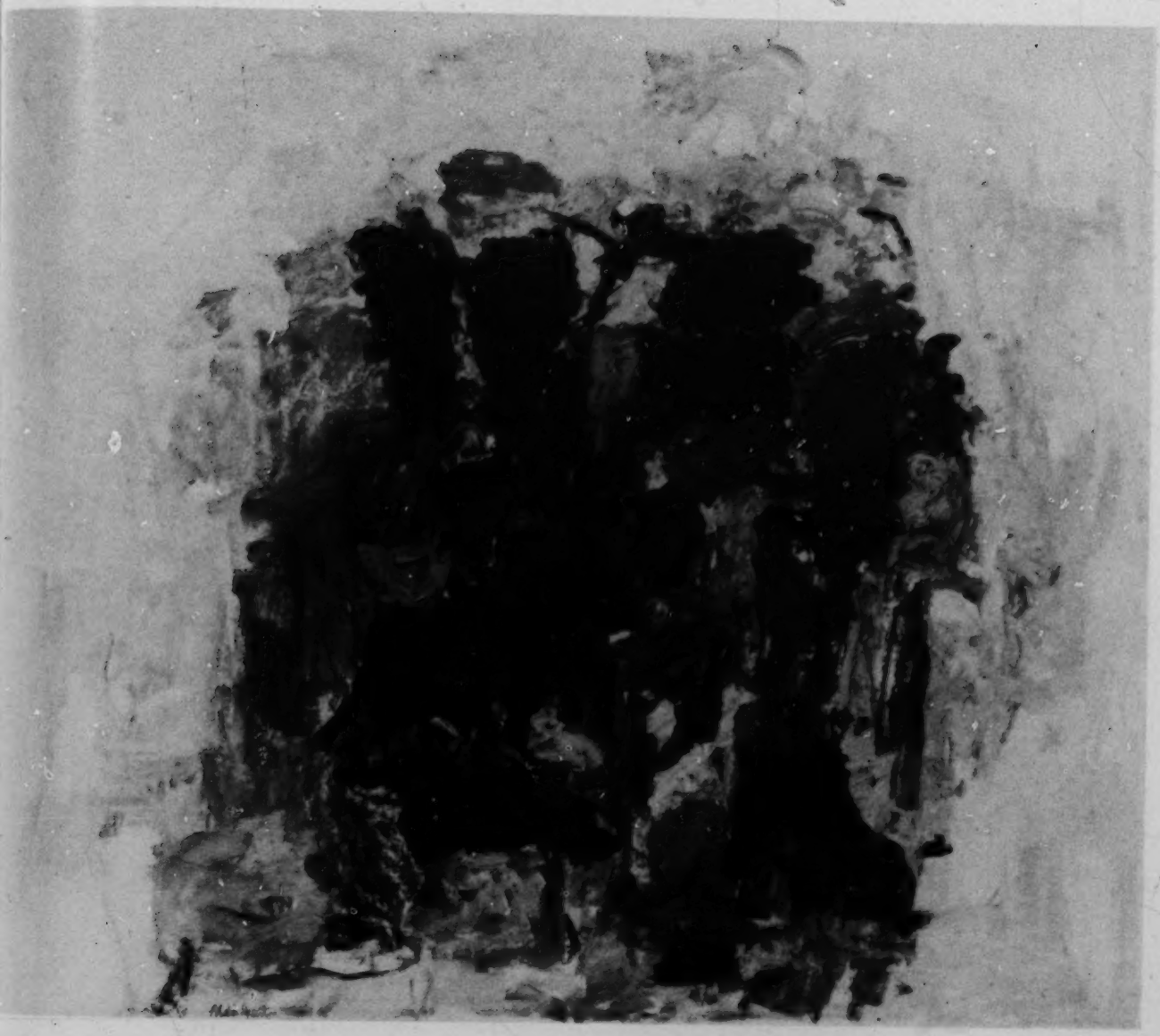
35. The Clock I. 1957. Collection The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Bliss Parkinson.

36. Fable II. 1957. Lent by the artist.

38. Rite. 1957. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

40. The Mirror. 1957. Collection Joseph H. Hazen, New York.

41. *Oasis.* 1957. *Joseph H. Hirshhorn Collection, New York.*



42. Native's Return. 1957. The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

43. Passage. 1957-58. Collection Mrs. Phyllis B. Lambert, New York.

45. To Fellini. 1958. Private Collection, New York.

69. Mott. 1958. Collection Dr. and Mrs. Nathan Alpers, Los Angeles.

53. Actor. 1958. Lent by the artist.

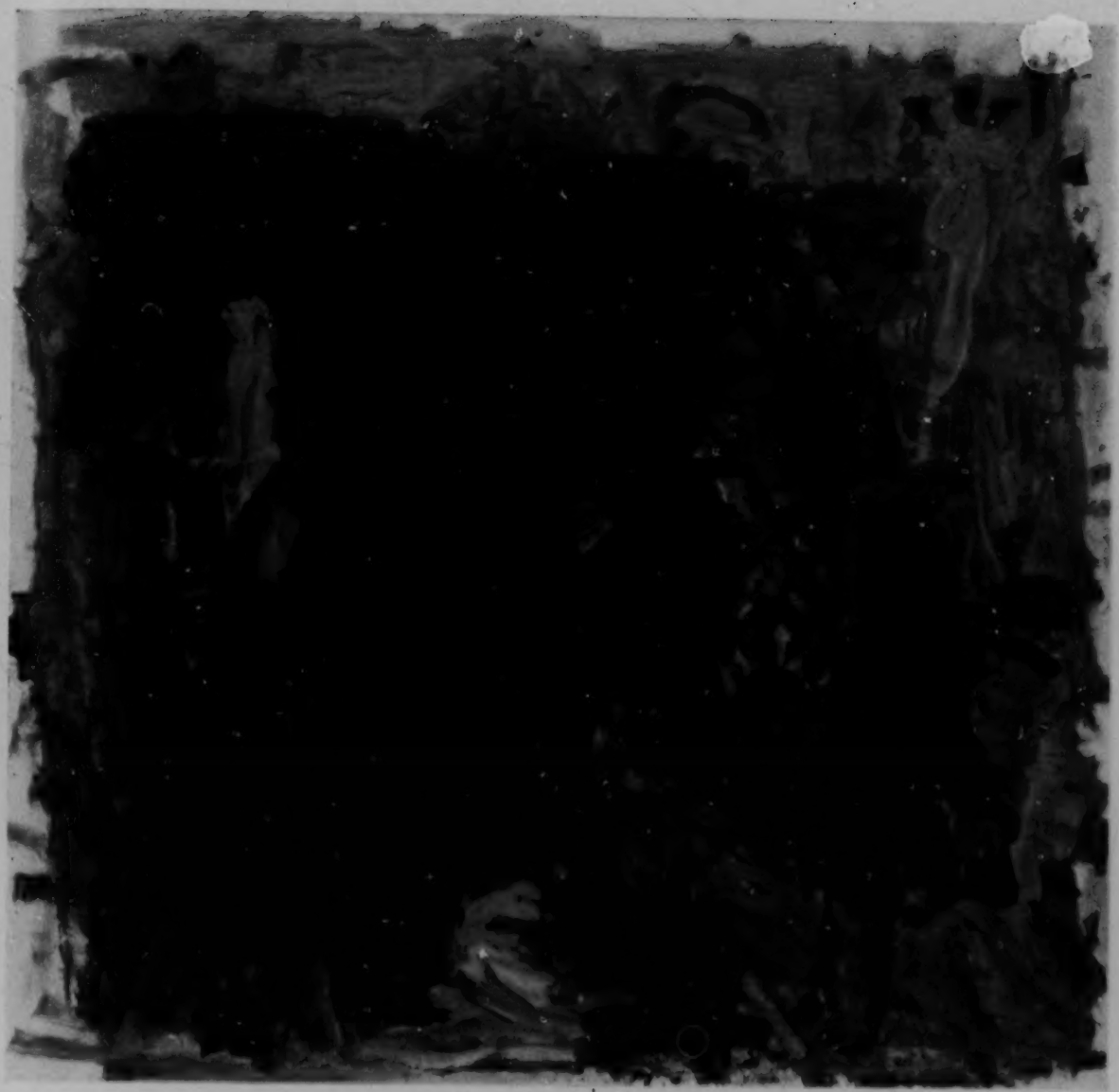
56. *The Return.* 1956-58. *Lent by the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.*

57. Untitled. 1958. Lent by the artist.

59. Poet. 1958. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Morris H. Grossman, New York.

60. Close-up I. 1959. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Leon A. Mnuchin, New York.

66. *Wild Grape. 1959. Lent by the artist.*



63. Grove I. 1959. Collection Lee V. Eastman, Scarsdale, New York.

68. *Traveler I.* 1959. *Lent by the artist.*

71. *Winter Flower.* 1958. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Weisman, Los Angeles.

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72. Painter I. 1959. Collection Mr. and Mrs. J. Daniel Weitzman, New York.

74. Traveler III. 1959-60. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Donald M. Blinken, New York.

77. Table. 1960. Collection The Baltimore Museum of Art.

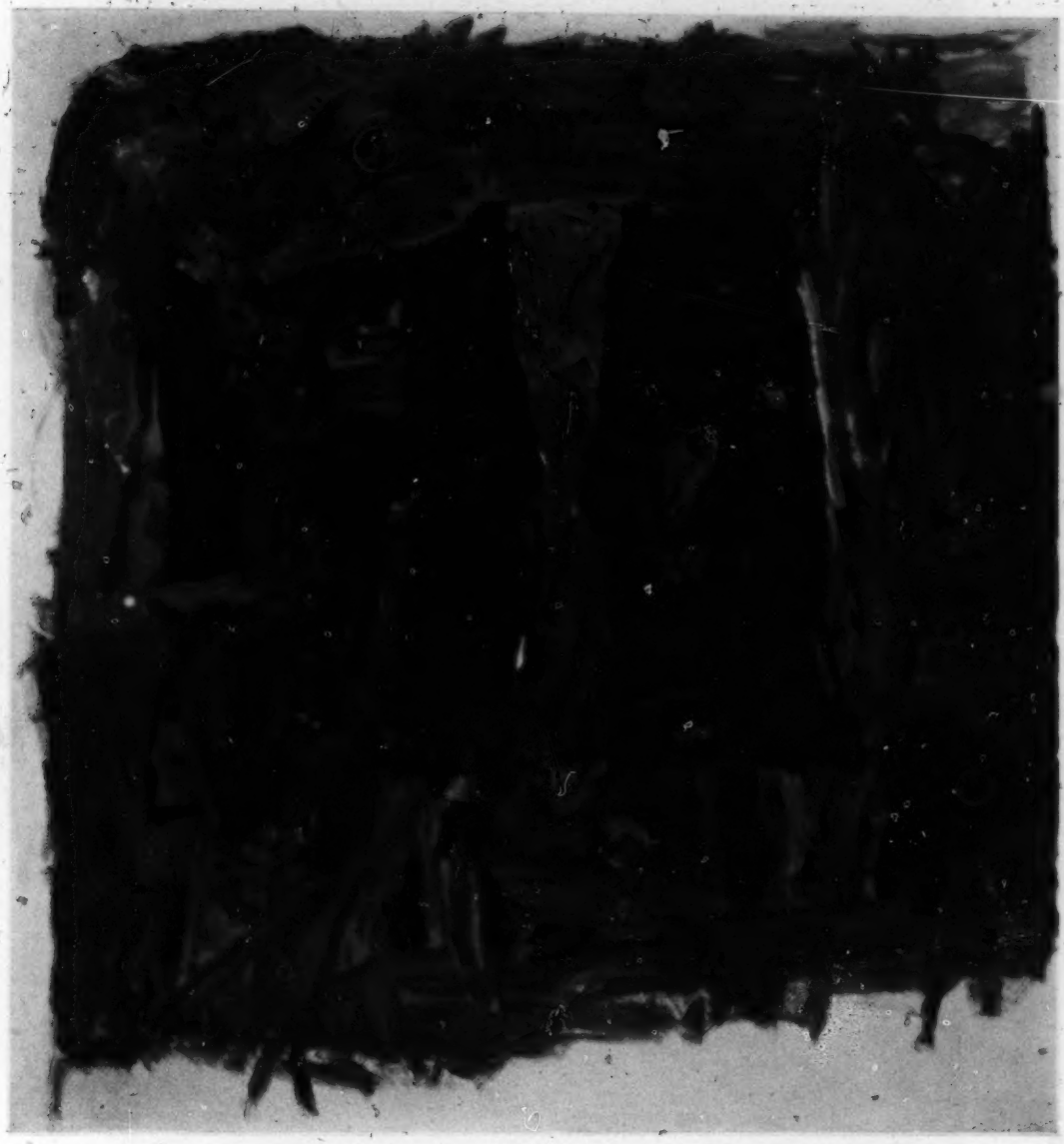
81. Blue Table. 1960. Lent by the artist.

78. Alchemist. 1960. Collection The Michener Foundation, Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, Pennsylvania.

79. *Path III. 1960. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.*

82. Painter II. 1959-60. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

90. Close-up III. 1961. Collection Lee V. Eastman, Scarsdale, New York.



91. Duo. 1961. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

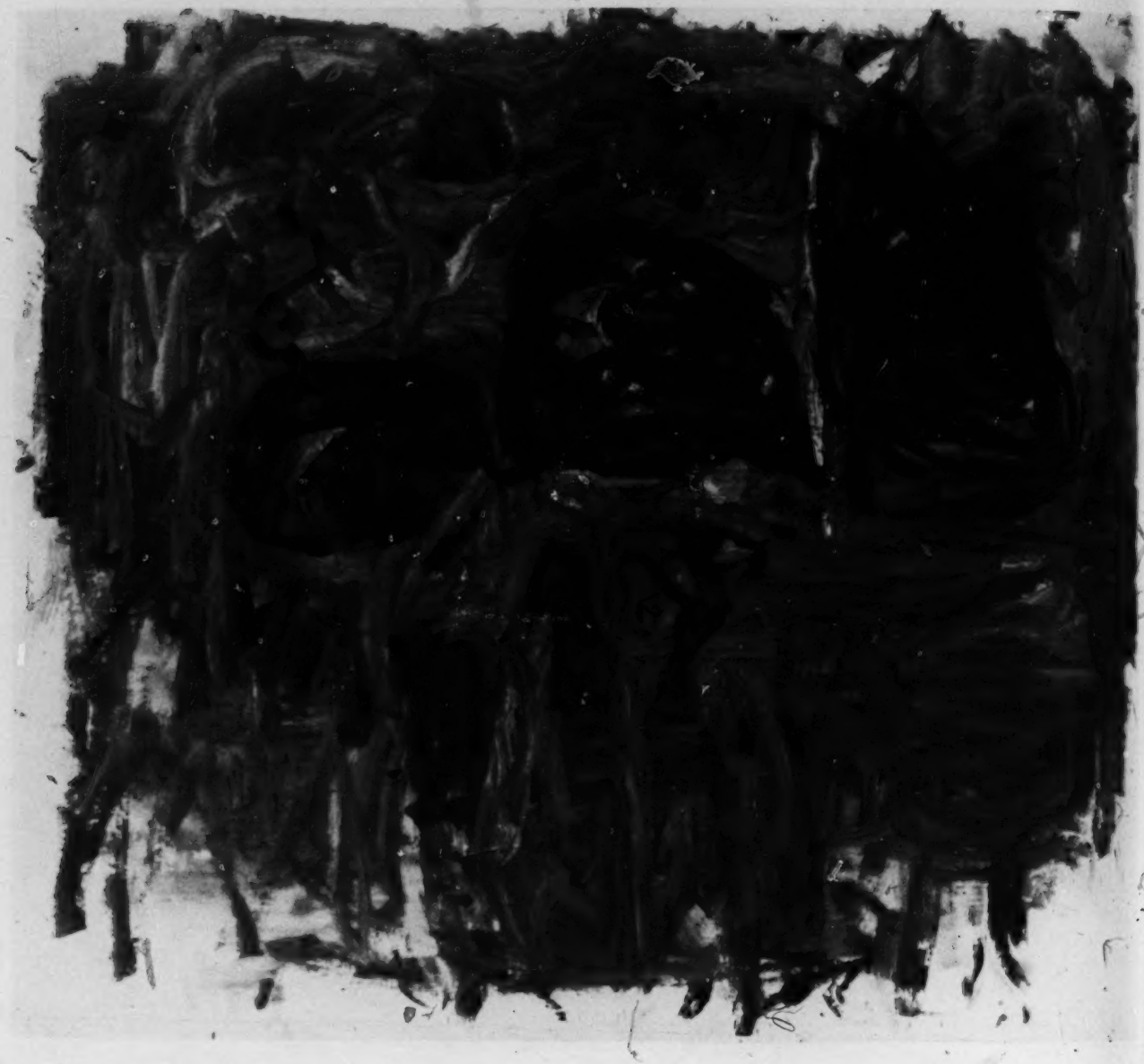
92. *The Actors I. 1961. Lent by the artist.*

93. *The Actors II. 1961. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.*

94. *The Actors III.* 1961. *Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.*

95. *The Actors IV.* 1961. *Lent by the artist.*

96. The Scale. 1961. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.



97. North. 1961-62. Lent by Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

DRAWINGS IN THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted drawings are lent by the artist.

DRAWING NO. 1 (TORMENTORS). 1947. Ink, 15 x 22⅛".

DRAWING NO. 2 (ISCHIA). 1949. Ink, 11¼ x 15½".

DRAWING NO. 3. 1949. Charcoal, 17¼ x 21⅛".

DRAWING NO. 4. 1950. Ink, 24½ x 38⅞".

DRAWING NO. 5. 1950. Ink, 12¼ x 16⅛".

DRAWING NO. 6. 1950. Ink, 12 x 16¼".

DRAWING NO. 7. 1950. Ink, 16⅛ x 12¼".

DRAWING NO. 8. 1950. Ink, 12¼ x 16⅛".

DRAWING NO. 9. 1951. Ink, 17 x 23½".
Collection Miss June Herman, New York.

DRAWING NO. 10. 1951. Ink, 18 x 21⅜".

DRAWING NO. 11. 1951. Ink, 18¾ x 23⅜".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Matter, New York.

DRAWING NO. 12. 1952. Ink, 18 x 24".

DRAWING NO. 13. 1952. Ink, 12 x 17⅝".

DRAWING NO. 14. 1953. Ink, 17½ x 22⅜".

DRAWING NO. 15. 1953. Ink, 17 x 21⅞".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Adja Yunkers, New York.

DRAWING NO. 16. 1953. Ink, 11⅜ x 17¾".

DRAWING NO. 17. 1953. Ink, 17½ x 23½".

DRAWING NO. 18. 1953. Ink, 16½ x 21¼".

DRAWING NO. 19 (RELATED TO ZONE). 1954. Ink, 17½ x 23¼".
Collection David Herbert, New York.

DRAWING NO. 20. 1958. Ink, 20 x 24⅞".

DRAWING NO. 21. 1958. Ink, 19 x 24".

DRAWING NO. 22. 1958. Ink, 17½ x 22".

DRAWING NO. 23. 1960. Ink on board, 18⅝ x 23⅝".

DRAWING NO. 24. 1960. Ink, 18 x 24".

DRAWING NO. 25. 1960. Ink, 18¾ x 23¾".

DRAWING NO. 26. 1960. Ink, 17⅞ x 24".

DRAWING NO. 27. 1960. Ink, 18⅝ x 23".

DRAWING NO. 28. 1960. Ink, 18 x 24".
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Kunitz, New York.

DRAWING NO. 29. 1960. Ink, 17⅞ x 23¾".

DRAWING NO. 30. 1961. Ink, 10⅞ x 13¾".

DRAWING NO. 31. 1962. Ink, 22 x 28".

DOCUMENTATION

CHRONOLOGY

1913	Born in Montreal, Canada
1919	Moved to Los Angeles, California
1930	Studied several months, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles
1934	Traveled in Mexico
1934-35	Worked in Public Works Administration, Los Angeles
1936	Moved to New York City
1936-40	Worked in mural division of WPA-Federal Arts Project
1937	Married Musa McKim
1938-42	Commissions from Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts
1941-45	Visiting Artist, State University of Iowa
1944	First one-man show, State University of Iowa
1945	Awarded First Prize, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh
	First New York exhibition, Midtown Galleries
1945-47	Visiting Artist, Washington University, St. Louis
1947	Awarded Guggenheim Fellowship
	Moved to Woodstock, New York
1948	Awarded $1,000 grant from American Academy of Arts and Letters
	Awarded Prix de Rome
1948-49	Traveled for a year in Italy, Spain, and France
1950	Visiting Artist, Spring Quarter, University of Minnesota
1951	Moved to Woodstock, New York, and New York City
1951-59	Taught drawing, New York University
1953-57	Taught drawing, Pratt Institute, New York
1959	Awarded $10,000 grant from Ford Foundation

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo

Art Institute of Chicago

The Baltimore Museum of Art

Cleveland Museum of Art

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

The Michener Foundation, Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, Pennsylvania

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

City Art Museum of St. Louis

Department of Art, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls

Tate Gallery, London

Washington University, St. Louis

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts

ONE MAN SHOWS

1944 University of Iowa, Iowa City
1945 Midtown Galleries, New York
1947 School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York
1950 University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
1952 Peridot Gallery, New York
1953 Egan Gallery, New York
1956 Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
1958 Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
1959 Retrospective one-man exhibition at the V Bienal, São Paulo, Brazil
1960 One-man exhibition at the XXX Biennale, Venice
Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
1961 Sidney Janis Gallery, New York
Two-man exhibition, with Franz Kline, Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles

MAJOR GROUP EXHIBITIONS

See also listing of Exhibition Catalogues
Exhibitions listed below include two or more paintings by the artist.

1951 *40 American Painters*, 1940-1950. University of Minnesota, Mineapolis
1953 *Abstract Expressionists*. Baltimore Museum of Art
1956 *12 Americans*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York
1957 *IV Bienal*. Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil
1958 *Primera Bienal Interamericana de Pintura y Grabado*. Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico City
The New American Painting. The Museum of Modern Art, New York
1959 *Eighteen Living Americans*. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
Kunst Nach 1945. II. Documenta. Cologne, Kassel
1961-62 *The Sidney Janis Painters*. John & Mable Ringling Museum, Sarasota
1961-62 *American Vanguard*. Austria, Yugoslavia, London, circulated by the United States Information Agency

MAJOR MURAL COMMISSIONS

1939 Facade, WPA Building, New York World's Fair
1940 Queensbridge Housing Project, New York
1941 Forestry Building, Laconia, New Hampshire (Collaboration with Musa McKim)
1942 Social Security Building, Washington, D.C.

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"Art in New York." Sam Hunter, *Playbill*, New York, vol. 1, no. 8, November, 1957, pp. 52-53 (interview)
"Statement." *Bradley Walker Tomlin*, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1957, p. 9
Recorded interview with June Pring. New York, Columbia University, June 25, 1957
"Statement." Francis Celentano, *The Origins and Development of Abstract Expressionism in the United States*, New York, unpublished Master's Thesis, New York University, 1957
"Statement." *It Is*, New York, no. 1, Spring, 1958, p. 44
"Statement." *Nature in Abstraction*, New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, 1958, p. 69
"Statement." *The New American Painting*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1958-59, pp. 40-43
"Panel Discussion." *It Is*, New York, no. 5, Spring, 1960, pp. 2, 34-38 (with Philip Guston, Robert Motherwell, Ad Reinhardt, Harold Rosenberg, Jack Tworkov)
Recorded interview with H. H. Arnason. New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, January 22-30, 1962

II. MONOGRAPH

Ashton, Dore. *Philip Guston*, New York, Grove Press, 1959

III. EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

Group Show. New York, National Institute of Arts and Letters, 1948
Philip Guston. Minneapolis, The University Gallery, University of Minnesota, April 10-May 12, 1950 (contains twelve reproductions of early work; documentation includes awards, teaching positions, commissions, etc.)
Contemporary American Painting. 5th Biennial Purchase Exhibition, Introduction by H. H. Arnason. Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, October 15-December 10, 1950
Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America, Introduction by Andrew C. Ritchie. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, January 23-March 25, 1951
Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture. New York, Ninth Street Gallery, May 21-June 10, 1951
40 American Painters, 1940-1950, Introduction by H. H. Arnason. Minneapolis, The University Gallery, University of Minnesota, June 5-August 30, 1951
Painting 1948-1951 by Philip Guston. New York, Peridot Gallery, January 2-26, 1952
American Vanguard Art for Paris Exhibition. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, December 26, 1951-January 5, 1952; Paris, Galerie de France, February 26-March 15, 1952
Abstract Expressionists. Baltimore, The Baltimore Museum of Art, March 3-29, 1953
Younger American Painters. New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, May 12-September 26, 1954
Italy Re-Discovered. Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, March 6-27, 1955

Catalogue. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, February 6-March 3, 1956
7 Americans. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, September 24-October 20, 1956
12 Americans. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, May 29-September 9, 1956
Catalogue. São Paolo, Brazil, Museu de Arte Moderna, September, 1957
8 Americans. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, April 1-20, 1957
Nature in Abstraction. New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, January 14-March 16, 1958 (circulated to six American cities by the Whitney Museum)
Primera Bienal Interamericana de Pintura y Grabado. Mexico City, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Secretaria de Educación Pública June 6-August 20, 1958
The 1913 Armory Show in Retrospect. Amherst, Massachusetts, Amherst College, February 17-March 17, 1958
The Museum and Its Friends: A Loan Exhibition. New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, April 30-June 15, 1958
The New American Painting. As Shown in Eight European Countries 1958-1959. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1959 (exhibition organized by the International Program of the Museum of Modern Art)
V Bienal, Introduction by Sam Hunter. São Paolo, Brazil, Museu de Arte Moderna, September 21-December 31, 1959 (exhibition organized by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts: text in English and Portuguese)
8 American Painters. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, January 5-21, 1959
Kunst Nach 1945. II. Documenta. Cologne, Kassel, July 11-October 11, 1959
The Museum and Its Friends: Second Loan Exhibition. Eighteen Living American Artists Selected by Friends of the Whitney Museum. New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, March 5-April 12, 1959
Modern American Painting 1930-1958, Text by Dorothy Adlow. St. Louis, City Art Museum of St. Louis, 1959; London, City of York Art Gallery, August 15-September 20, 1960 (exhibition circulated by the United States Information Agency)
American National Exhibition in Moscow. Sokolniki, Summer, 1959 (exhibition organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York)
Guston. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, December 28, 1959-January 23, 1960
9 American Painters. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, April 4-23, 1960
Undici Americani. Milan, Galleria dell'Ariete, April 27-May, 1960
Contemporary American Painting. Columbus, Ohio, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, January 14-February 19, 1960
Quattro Artisti Americani: Guston, Hofmann, Kline, Roszak, Introduction by Kenneth B. Sawyer. Venice, XXX Biennale, 1960
XXX Biennale Internazionale d'arte. "Philip Guston," by Dore Ashton, Venice, 1960, pp. 318-319
American Abstract Expressionists and Imagists, Introduction by H. H. Arnason. New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, October 13-December 31, 1961
American Vanguard, Introduction by H. H. Arnason, Austria, Yugoslavia, London; 1961-1962 (circulated by the United States Information Agency)
One Hundred Paintings from the G. David Thompson Collection. New York, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, May-August, 1961 (part of a larger exhibition held in Düsseldorf Kunstmuseum, December 14, 1960-January 29, 1961)
An Exhibition in Tribute to Sidney Janis. State College, Pennsylvania, Hetzel Union Gallery, February 3-24, 1961
Modern American Drawings. Jerusalem, Bezalel National Museum, 1961 (catalogues in English and Hebrew; exhibition organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York)
10 American Painters. New York, Sidney Janis Gallery, May, 1961
The Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Ben Heller. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1961
Ringling Museum of Art Bulletin. "The Sidney Janis Painters," Sarasota, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, vol. 1, no. 3, 1961 (foreword by Kenneth Donahue, introduction by Dore Ashton)
The Face of the Fifties. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Art Museum, 1961
Guston-Kline. Los Angeles, Dwan Gallery, April 2-26, 1961
Group Show. Chicago, Holland-Goldowsky Gallery, September-October, 1961 (five drawings)
The artist has also exhibited regularly since the 1940s in all major national and annual shows, including those organized by

Whitney Museum of American Art,
The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts,
The Carnegie Institute,
The San Francisco Museum of Art,
The Art Institute of Chicago,
The Corcoran Gallery,
Krannert Art Museum of the University of Illinois.

IV. PERIODICALS AND BOOKS

Articles are arranged alphabetically within a chronological listing.

*Articles of special interest are marked with an asterisk *.*

In the following bibliography, articles listed as REVIEWS *describe a single exhibition.*

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1942 *Janson, H. W. "'Martial Memory' by Philip Guston and American Painting Today," *St. Louis Museum Bulletin*, St. Louis vol. 27, nos. 3-4, pp. 34-41 (with reproductions: *Fighting Boys*, 1940, and *Fighting Boys*, detail of mural in Queensbridge Housing Project, 1942)

1943 "Brave New World, F.O.B." *Fortune*, New York, vol. 28, no. 2, August, 1943, pp. 124, 126-127 (illustrations by the artist)
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Frost, Rosamond, "Guston: Meaning Out of Monumentality," *Art News*, New York, no. 43, February 1, 1945, p. 24
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O. Henry, "Gift of the Magi," *Art News*, New York, vol. 45, section 2, December, 1946, pp. 69-76 (illustrations by the artist)
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Gruskin, Alan D. *Painting in the U.S.A.*, New York, Doubleday, 1948, pp. 88, 115
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Time, New York, no. 59, January 7, 1952, p. 56 (with photograph of the artist)

1953 *Reviews*, Exhibition at Egan Gallery, January 14-February 7, 1953:
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Porter, Fairfield, *Art News*, New York, February, 1953, p. 55

1955 Schwartz, Delmore. "Fulfillment: Poem," *Art News Annual*, New York, no. 24, 1955, pp. 90-91 (with drawing by the artist)

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